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T. F. Todman

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HENRY SCOUGAL. *THEOL. PROF.*

Author of "The Life of God in the Soul of Man."

Original in the College Hall, Aberdeen

DISCOURSES

ON

IMPORTANT

SUBJECTS.

BY

HENRY SCOUGAL A.M.
and S. T. P.

To which is added,

A SERMON preached at his Funeral,

By GEORGE GAIRDEN, D. D.

GLASGOW:

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MDCCLI.

Memoriae Sacrum.

HENRICUS SCOUGAL,

Reverendi in Christo Patris Patricii

Episcopi Aberdonensis filius;

Philosophiae in hac ACADEMIA REGIA,

Per quadriennium, totidemque annis

Ibidem Theologiae Professor:

Ecclesiae in Auchterless, uno anno interstite, Pastor.

Multa in tam brevissimo curriculo

Didicit, praestitit, docuit.

Coeli avidus, et coelo maturus,

Obiit Anno Dom. MDCLXXVIII.

Aetatis suae XXVIII.

Et hic exuvias mortalitatis posuit.

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DISCOURSES

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

THE SUPERIOR EXCELLENCY OF THE RELIGIOUS.

PROV. xii. 26.

The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.

HE who conſidereth the excellency and advantage of piety and religion, how conformable it is to the beſt principle of our nature, and how profitable to our intereſts, may juſtly wonder and be ſurpriſed at the bad entertainment it receives in the world; and eaſily conclude, that this muſt needs flow from ſome groſs miſtakes about it, and prejudices againſt it; ſince it is ſo natural to us to love that which is good, and delight in that which is amiable, when things are not miſrepreſented.

Certainly all who are enemies to holineſs, have taken up falſe meaſures and diſadvantageous notions of it. the ſenſual perſon hateth it as harſh and unpleaſant, doing violence to his carnal appetites; and looks on religion as a contrivance to deprive and rob him of the pleaſures of this world, by propoſing thoſe of another. the politic wit ſlights it as fooliſh and imprudent; and though he acknowledge it a neceſſary inſtrument of government, a good device to overawe a multitude, yet he counts it a great weakneſs to be further concerned in it than may be conſiſtent with, and ſubſervient to ſecular deſigns. again, the gallants of our age deſpiſe it as a baſe and ignoble temper, unworthy of a high birth and genteel education, incident to meaner ſouls, proceeding from cowardly and ſuperſtitious fear, depreſſing the mind, and rendering it incapable of high and aſpiring thoughts. hence they make it their buſineſs to pour contempt upon piety, and advance the reputation of thoſe vicious courſes which themſelves have embraced; and becauſe there are

yet ſome left, who, by practiſing and recommending virtue, do oppoſe and condemn their lewd practices, they ſtudy to avenge themſelves on them by the perſecution of their tongues, and all the ſcoffs and reproaches they can invent and utter: which hath proved a mean moſt unhappily ſucceſsful to deter many weak minds from goodneſs, making them chuſe to be wicked, that they may not be laughed at.

It is to diſcover the groſſneſs of this miſtake, and expoſe the abſurdities and unreaſonableneſs of theſe principles and practices; to vindicate the excellency of piety, and to recommend it to all truly generous ſouls, that we have made choice of this text; which tells us in ſhort and plain terms, that 'the righteous is more 'excellent than his neighbour.'

None can be ſo little acquainted with the ſcripture-dialect, as not to know, that though righteouſneſs in its trueſt acceptation importeth only the obſervation of thoſe duties we owe our neighbour, yet it is uſually taken more largely for piety and virtue in general. and

good reaſon too; ſince there is no part of our duty but we owe it as a debt unto God; no exerciſe of religion but it is an act of juſtice. whence the clear importance of the text is, that whatever excellency other perſons may pretend to, the pious and religious men are the truly noble and generous perſons in the world; as the Pſalmiſt expreſſeth it, 'the ſaints 'are excellent ones in the earth.'

Now, we ſhall not trouble you with any further explication of the words, which are ſo clear, or with any diviſion of a propoſition ſo ſimple; but ſhall illuſtrate and confirm the aſſertion, by producing ſuch undoubted evidences of nobleneſs and excellency, as are proper to godlineſs, and to thoſe who practiſe it: where we may have occaſion to hint at ſuch characters of a pious man, as, beſides the general deſign, may perhaps ſerve to put us in mind of ſome parts of our duty which we are not ſo careful to obſerve; and which therefore may be uſeful even to thoſe who have already embraced the practice of religion.

Being to ſpeak of the nobleneſs and

excellency of religion, it may be expected we ſhould ſay ſomething of its origin and extract; that being the whole of nobility which ſome underſtand, and others pretend to. we might take occaſion to diſcover the folly of glorying in the antiquity of an illuſtrious houſe, or the famed virtue of worthy anceſtors, who perhaps, were they alive, would diſown their degenerate progeny. but I ſhall not inſiſt upon this; it is a vanity which hath been chaſtiſed ſufficiently even by Heathen pens. nay, we ſhall ſo far comply with the common ſentiments of the world, as to acknowledge, that high birth and liberal education may contribute much to elevate the minds of men, and accuſtom them to great thoughts. but ſure, whatever advantages any may pretend to by their birth, there are none to be preferred to the children of God, the blood-royal of heaven, the brethren of Chriſt; of whom we may ſay, that 'as 'he is, ſo are they, each one reſembling the ſon of a king.'

If we trace the lines of earthly extraction, we ſhall find them all meet in

one point, all terminate in duſt and earth. but in the heraldry of heaven we ſhall find a twofold pedigree. ſin is the offſpring of hell, and 'wicked men are of 'their father the devil,' whoſe work they perform. on the other hand, holineſs is the ſeed of God, and the ſaints have obtained to be called 'the ſons of the Moſt 'High.' and think not theſe are empty titles, and big words, to amuſe the world; no, they are equally juſt and important. pious men are really 'partakers of the 'divine nature,' and ſhall obtain an intereſt in the inheritance which is entailed on that relation. never were the qualities of a parent more really derived unto their children, than the image and ſimilitude of the divine excellencies are ſtamped upon theſe heaven-born ſouls: ſome beams of that eternal light are darted in upon them, and make them ſhine with an eminent ſplendor; and they are always aſpiring to a nearer conformity with him, ſtill breathing after a further communication of his holy ſpirit, and daily finding the power thereof correcting the ruder deformities of their

natures, and ſuperinducing the beautiful delineations of God's image upon them, that any who obſerve them may perceive their relation to God, by the excellency of their deportment in the world; as will clearly appear in the ſequel of our diſcourſe.

Having ſpoken of the righteous or godly man's excellency, in regard of his birth and extraction, we proceed to conſider his qualities and endowments; and ſhall begin with thoſe of his underſtanding, his knowledge, and wiſdom. the wiſe man tells us, that 'a man of un-'derſtanding is of an excellent ſpirit.' and ſure, if any man in the world is to be accounted of for knowledge, it is the pious man. his knowledge is converſant about the nobleſt objects; he contemplates that infinite being, whoſe perfections can never enough be admired, but ſtill afford new matter to aſtoniſh and delight him, to raviſh his affections, to raiſe his wonder. he ſtudies the law of God, 'which maketh him wiſer than all 'his teachers.' as the reverend Dr. Tillotſon hath it, "it is deſervedly accoun-

" ted an excellent piece of knowledge,
" to underſtand the laws of the land, the
" cuſtoms of the country we live in;
" how much more to know the ſtatutes
" of heaven, the eternal laws of righte-
" ouſneſs, the will of the univerſal Mo-
" narch, and the cuſtoms of that country
" where we hope to live for ever?" and, if he have a mind to the ſtudies of nature and human ſcience, he is beſt diſpoſed for it, having his faculties cleared, and his underſtanding heightened by divine contemplations.

But his knowledge doth not reſt in ſpeculations, but directeth his practice, and determineth his choice. and he is the moſt prudent as well as the moſt knowing perſon. he knows how to ſecure his greateſt intereſt, to provide for the longeſt life, to prefer ſolid treaſures to gilded trifles, the ſoul to the body, eternity to a moment. he knoweth the temper of his own ſpirit; he can moderate his paſſions, and over-rule his carnal appetites: which certainly is a far more important piece of wiſdom, than to underſtand the intrigues of a ſtate, to fa-

thom the councils of princes, to know the pulſe of a people, or balance the intereſts of kingdoms. yea, piety doth heighten and advance even moral prudence itſelf; both obliging and directing a man to 'order his affairs with diſcre-'tion: it maketh the ſimple wiſe.' and what was ſaid by holy David, and twice repeated by his wiſe ſon, will hold good in every man's experience, that 'the fear 'of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom.' and thus much of the knowledge and wiſdom wherein the righteous man excelleth his neighbour.

We proceed to another of his endowments, the greatneſs of his mind, and his contempt of the world. we can never take better meaſures of a man's ſpirit, than from the things he delighteth in, and ſets his heart upon: 'qualis 'amor, talis animus.' to be taken up with trifles, and concerned in little things, is an evidence of a weak and naughty mind. and ſo are all wicked and irreligious perſons. their thoughts are confined to low and mean things; deſigns of ſcraping together money, or

ſpending it in luxury; or of ſatisfying a paſſion, or pleaſing a luſt; of obtaining the favour of great ones, or the applauſe of the vulgar. the greateſt happineſs they aim at, is, to be a maſter of the country where they live; to dwell in ſtately houſes, and to be backed with a train of attendants; to lie ſoftly, and fare deliciouſly, and ſuch like attainments; which a wiſe man would think himſelf unhappy if he could not deſpiſe.

But the pious perſon hath his thoughts far above theſe painted vanities; his felicity is not patched up of ſo mean ſhreds; it is ſimple, and compriſed in one chief good: his ſoul advanceth itſelf by rational paſſions towards the author of its being, the fountain of goodneſs and pleaſure: 'he hath none in heaven but 'him; and there is none upon earth 'whom he deſires beſide him.'

The knowledge of nature hath been reputed a good mean to enlarge the ſoul, and breed in it a contempt of earthly enjoyments. he that hath accuſtomed himſelf to conſider the vaſtneſs of the univerſe, and the ſmall proportion which

the point we live in bears to the reſt of the world, may perhaps come to think leſs of the poſſeſſions of ſome acres, or of that fame which can at moſt ſpread itſelf through a ſmall corner of this earth. whatever be in this, ſure I am that the knowledge of God, and the frequent thoughts of heaven, muſt needs prove far more effectual to elevate and aggrandize the mind. when once the ſoul by contemplation is raiſed to any right apprehenſion of the divine perfections, and the foretaſtes of celeſtial bliſs; how will this world, and all that is in it, vaniſh and diſappear before his eyes! with what holy diſdain will he look down upon things, which are the higheſt objects of other mens ambitious deſires! all the ſplendor of courts, all the pageantry of greatneſs, will no more dazzle his eyes, than the faint luſtre of a glow-worm will trouble the eagle, after it hath been beholding the ſun. he is little concerned who obtained this dignity, or that fortune; who ſits higheſt at table, or goes firſt out of the door. his thoughts are taken up with greater matters; how

he ſhall pleaſe his maker, and obtain an intereſt in that land of promiſe, ſome of the fruits whereof he hath already taſted. and from thence ariſeth that conſtant and equal frame of ſpirit, which the pious man's mind maintains in all the changes and viciſſitudes of things; while he who hath not his ſpirit balanced with religious principles, is lift up and caſt down like a ſhip on the ſea, with every variation of fortune, and partakes perhaps of all the motions of this inferior world, whereunto his heart and affections are faſtened. and certainly he muſt be far more happy and generous both, who ſitteth looſe to the world, and can with the greateſt calmneſs and tranquillity poſſeſs his own ſoul, while all things without are in hurry and confuſion. private diſaſters cannot diſcompoſe him, nor public calamities reach him: he looks upon the troubles and combuſtions of the world, as men do on the ruin and deſolation of cities wherein themſelves have little intereſt, with no other concernment than that of pity, to ſee men trouble themſelves and others to ſo little purpoſe. 'ſi

'fractus illabatur orbis:' if the world ſhould ſhake, and the foundations of the earth be removed; yet would he reſt ſecure in a full acquieſcence to the will of God, and confident dependence on his providence: 'He ſhall not be afraid of 'evil tidings: and his heart is fixed, 'truſting in the Lord.'

And this, by the affinity, will lead us to another endowment, wherein the excellency of the righteous man doth appear; and that is, that heroic magnanimity and courage wherewith he is inſpired, and which makes him confidently atchieve the moſt difficult actions, and reſolutely undergo the hardeſt ſufferings that he is called to. for this ſee the epiſtle to the Hebrews, chap. xi. ver. 33. 'Through faith ſome have ſubdued king-'doms, &c.' this was their active courage; ver. 35. 'others again were tor-'tured,' &c. this was their paſſive courage; which in Chriſtians is moſt eminent and uſeful. true valour doth more appear by ſuffering than by doing; and doubtleſs this is the hardeſt trial of the two. were it not for ſuffering hardſhips,

the greateſt coward in the world would be man enough for the higheſt enterprizes. it is not ſo much the difficulty of great actions, as the danger that attends them, which makes men fear to undertake them: ſo that to ſuffer chearfully muſt be the greateſt proof of courage. and ſure, we may appeal to the world to produce ſuch eminent inſtances of fortitude and reſolution, as Chriſtian martyrs have ſhewn under thoſe torments which cannot be mentioned without horror. how often hath their conſtancy amazed their bloody perſecutors, and outwearied the cruelties of their tormentors! nor was this patience per-force: they might have ſaved themſelves that trouble, by throwing a little incenſe into the fire, or ſpeaking a few blaſphemous words; but well had they learned 'not 'to fear thoſe who can kill the body,' &c. nor were they borne out by an obſtinate humour, and perverſe ſtoical wilfulneſs: they were neither ſtupid and inſenſible, nor proud and ſelf-conceited; but their ſufferings were undertaken with calmneſs, and ſuſtained with moderation.

Let Heathen Rome boaſt of a Regulus, a Decius, or ſome two or three more, ſtimulated by a deſire of glory, and perhaps animated by ſome ſecret hopes of future reward, who have devoted their life to the ſervice of their country. but, alas! what is this to an infinite number, not only of men, but even of women and children, who have died for the profeſſion of their faith; neither ſeeking or expecting any praiſe from men? and tell me who among the heathen did willingly endure the loſs of reputation? nay, that was their idol, and they could not part with it. and certainly it is a great meanneſs of ſpirit, to be overawed with fear of diſgrace, and depend upon the thoughts of the people. true courage doth equally fortify the mind againſt all thoſe evils, and will make a man hazard his honour, as well as other things, when occaſion calls for it.

Now, if the celebrated actions of the heathens come ſhort of true courage, what ſhall we ſay of the furious boldneſs of the hectors of our age, who pretend to proweſs and gallantry by far leſs rea-

ſonable methods? when, blinded with paſſion, and animated with wine, they are ready enough, on half a quarrel, to hazard their own, and their neighbour's life, and ſoul too, in a duel? yea, they will not ſtand to brave heaven itſelf, and to provoke the Almighty by their horrid oaths and blaſphemies. and one ſhould think, that theſe muſt needs be the hardieſt and moſt valiant people in the world; if they are not afraid of the Almighty, ſure nothing elſe ſhould fright them. and yet you ſhall find theſe very perſons, when caſt on a bed by ſickneſs, or brought to the ſcaffold by juſtice, to betray a miſerable faintneſs and puſillanimity: they are forced now to think on the terrors of death, and the more terrible conſequences of it; and their counterfeit courage, being deſtitute of thoſe props which formerly ſuſtained it, doth now diſcover its weakneſs. nor is it any wonder: for what ſhould make a man willingly leave this world, unleſs he expected a more happy condition in another? certainly there is nothing can fortify the ſoul with a true and manly courage, but

a confidence in God, and hopes of future bleſſedneſs. 'The wicked flee when no 'man purſueth; but the righteous is bold 'as a lion;' and from that accounted 'more excellent than his neighbour.'

From courage and magnanimity, we paſs to that which is the genuine iſſue and ordinary conſequent of it, the Liberty and Freedom of the righteous perſon. liberty is a privilege ſo highly rated by all men, that many run the greateſt hazards for the very name of it: but there are few that enjoy it. I ſhall not ſpeak of thoſe fetters of ceremony, and chains of ſtate, wherewith great men are tied; which makes their actions conſtrained, and their converſe uneaſy: this is more to be pitied than blamed. but wicked and irreligious perſons are under a far more ſhameful bondage: they are ſlaves to their own luſts, and ſuffer the violence and tyranny of their irregular appetites. this is frequently talked of, but ſeldom conſidered or believed; and therefore it will not be amiſs to bring an inſtance or two for the illuſtration of it. obſerve a paſſionate man, and you ſhall

find him frequently tranſported and overpowered by his anger, and carried to thoſe extremities, of which a little time makes him aſhamed; and he becomes as much diſpleaſed with himſelf, as formerly he was with his adverſary: and yet, on the next occaſion, he will obey that ſame paſſion which he hath condemned. what a drudge is a covetous man to his riches, which take up his thoughts all the day long, and break his ſleep in the night! how muſt the ambitious man fawn and flatter, and croſs his very humour with hopes to ſatisfy it; ſtoop to the ground that he may aſpire, courting and careſſing thoſe whom he hates; which doubtleſs is done with a great violence and conſtraint! the drunkard, when he awakes, and hath ſlept out his cups and his frolic humour, and finds his head aking, his ſtomach qualmiſh, and perhaps his purſe empty, and reflects on the folly and unhandſome expreſſions or actions he may have fallen into in his drink, how will he condemn himſelf for that exceſs! what harangues ſhall we have from him in the praiſe of tempe-

rance! what promiſes and reſolutions of future ſobriety! and yet, on the next occaſion, the poor ſlave ſhall be dragged away to the tavern by thoſe whom he muſt call his friends; and thank them who put that abuſe upon him, which a wiſe and ſober perſon will rather die than ſuffer. further, the luxurious would fain preſerve or recover his health; and to this end finds it requiſite to keep a temperate and ſober diet. no; but he muſt not. he is preſent at a feaſt, and his ſuperior appetite calls for a large meaſure of delicious fare; and his palate muſt be pleaſed, though the whole body ſhould ſuffer for it: or he hath met with a lewd woman; and though his whole bones ſhould rot, 'and a dart ſtrike through 'his liver,' yet muſt he obey the commands of his luſts: 'He goeth after her 'ſtraightway, as the ox goeth to the 'ſlaughter, or as a fool to the correction 'of the ſtocks.' now, there can be no greater evidence of ſlavery and bondage, than thus to do what themſelves know to be prejudicial. it were eaſy to illuſtrate this bondage and thraldom of the

ſoul, in all the other inſtances of vice and impiety. and certainly what St. Peter ſaith of ſome falſe teachers, may be well applied to all wicked perſons, 'While they promiſe freedom, they 'themſelves are the ſervants of corrup-'tion: for of whom a man is overcome, 'of the ſame is he brought in bondage.'

But the holy and religious perſon hath broken theſe fetters, caſt off the yoke of ſin, and become the freeman of the Lord. it is religion that reſtores freedom to the ſoul, which philoſophy did pretend to: it is that which doth ſway and moderate all thoſe blind paſſions and impetuous affections, which elſe would hinder a man from the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of himſelf; and makes him maſter of his own thoughts, motions, and deſires, that he may do with freedom what he judgeth moſt honeſt and convenient. and thus 'the righteous excelleth his neighbour,' as much as a freeman doth the baſeſt ſlave.

Another particular wherein the nobleneſs and excellency of religion does appear, is in a charitable and benign tem-

per. there is no greater evidence of a baſe and narrow ſoul, than for a man to have all his thoughts taken up about private and ſelfiſh intereſt; and ſo, if they be well, not to care what becometh of the reſt of the world. on the other hand, an extenſive charity and kindneſs, as it is the one half of our religion, ſo it is an eminent point of generoſity. 'The righ-'teous is gracious and full of compaſ-'ſion; he ſheweth favour and lendeth;' and makes it his work to ſerve mankind as much as he is able. his bounty is not confined to his kindred and relations, to thoſe of his own party and mode of religion: this were but a diſguiſed kind of ſelf-love. it is enough to him that they are Chriſtians; or, if they were not, yet are they men; and therefore deſerve our pity, but not our hatred or neglect, becauſe of their errors. it is true, he carries a ſpecial kindneſs for thoſe in whom he diſcovers a principle of goodneſs and virtue; in thoſe excellent ones is all his delight. but then, he doth not take his meaſure ſo much from their judgment and opinions, as from the integrity of their life, and exactneſs of their practices.

His charity doth not expreſs itſelf in one particular inſtance, as that of giving of alms; but is vented as many ways as the variety of occaſions do call for, and his power can reach to. he aſſiſteth the poor with his money, the ignorant with his counſel, the afflicted with comfort, the ſick with the beſt of his skill, all with his bleſſings and prayers. if he cannot build hoſpitals, yet he will ſtudy to perſuade thoſe who can: if he hath no money to redeem captives, yet will he employ his intereſt in the court of heaven for their deliverance: though he cannot recover a dying child to the afflicted parēnts, yet will he endeavour to perſuade them to ſubmiſſion and reſignation, which will render them more happy; and will go hard, but he will find ſome way, either to benefit or oblige every man with whom he converſeth. let no man upbraid us with the contrary practices of many high pretenders to religion, who are notedly ſelfiſh and churliſh perſons. we are not to defend the actions of all who would be thought godly: nor muſt you take your meaſures of piety

from what you obſerve in them. but look through the goſpel, and you ſhall find charity and bounty ſo paſſionately recommended, ſo frequently inculcated, and ſo indiſpenſably required, that you may eaſily conclude there are no Chriſtians in earneſt, but thoſe who practiſe it. yea, ſo peculiar is this liberal and benign temper to holy and religious perſons, that nothing but a faint reſemblance and falſe imitation is to be found elſewhere in the world. other mens ſeeming bounty is always marred by the baſe principle it proceeds from, and ſelfiſh end it tends to. the apoſtle hath told us, that 'a man 'may give all his goods to feed the poor, 'and yet want charity;' and all theſe expences ſhall profit him nothing. importunity may perhaps wring ſomething out of his pocket, or a willingneſs to be delivered from the trouble of a miſerable ſpectacle; but vanity, and a deſire of applauſe, have uſually the greateſt intereſt in his diſtributions. this made the hypocrites of old proclaim their alms with trumpets; and this makes their ſucceſſors in our times delight to have

their good works of this kind recorded to the greateſt advantage, that poſterity may read them on walls and public regiſters.

To the ſame principle muſt we refer what in the world paſſeth for a very conſiderable inſtance of generoſity, the keeping of a great houſe and well-furniſhed table; which nevertheleſs is more ordinarily the effect of pride and vain-glory, than of humility or hoſpitality. it is a part of their ſplendor and ſtate; and they deck their tables for the ſame end that they put on fine cloaths, to be talked of and admired in the world. you may gueſs it by the perſons whom they entertain; who are uſually ſuch as need leaſt of their charity, and for whom they have many times as little kindneſs or concernment, as an innkeeper for his gueſts: nor are they leſs mercenary than he; the one ſells his meat for money, the other for praiſe. far more generous is the practice of the pious man; who, as he chuſeth moſt to benefit thoſe who can make him no recompence, ſo he doth not trouble the world with the noiſe of his charity; yea

'his left hand knoweth not what his 'right hand beſtoweth:' and that which doth moſt endear his bounty, is the love and affection whence it proceeds.

We ſhall name but one inſtance more wherein 'the righteous man excelleth 'his neighbour;' and that is, his venerable temperance and purity. he hath riſen above the vaporous ſphere of ſenſual pleaſure, which darkeneth and debaſeth the mind, which ſullies its luſtre, and abates its native vigour; while profane perſons, wallowing in impure luſts, do ſink themſelves below the condition of men. can there be any ſpark of generoſity, any degree of excellency in him who makes his belly his god, or places his felicity in the embraces of a ſtrumpet? we ſpoke before of the ſlavery, we ſpeak now of the deformity of theſe ſins; and ſhall add, that one of the moſt ſhameful and miſerable ſpectacles in the world, is, to ſee a man born to the uſe of reaſon, and perhaps to an eminent fortune, drink away his religion, his reaſon, his ſenſe; and ſo expoſe himſelf to the pity of wiſe men, the contempt of his own ſer-

vants, the deriſion of his children, and fools, to every danger, and to every ſnare; and that this muſt paſs in the eyes of many for a piece of gallantry, and neceſſary accompliſhment of a gentleman. good God! how are the minds of men poiſoned with perverſe notions? what unreaſonable meaſures do they take of things? we may expect next they ſhall commend theft, and make harangues to the praiſe of parricide; for they are daily advancing in the boldneſs of their impieties, and with confidence avowing them. other ages have practiſed wickedneſs; but to ours is reſerved the impudence to glory in them. but would men but open their own eyes, and give way to the ſentiments of their own minds, they would ſoon alter their maxims, and diſcover the miſerable deformity of vice, and the amiable beauty and majeſty of religion: that it doth at once adorn and advance the human nature, and hath in it every thing generous and noble, chearful and ſpiritual, free and ingenuous; in a word, that 'the righteous is more ex-
' cellent than his neighbour.'

Before we proceed further, it will be neceſſary to take off ſome prejudices and objections that ariſe againſt the nobleneſs and excellency of religion. and the firſt is, that it injoineth lowlineſs and humility; which men ordinarily look upon as an abject and baſe diſpoſition. what! will they ſay, can ever that man aſpire to any thing that is excellent, whoſe principles oblige him to lie low and grovel on the ground; who thinks nothing of himſelf, and is content that all the world think nothing of him? is this a diſpoſition fit for any but thoſe whoſe croſs fortune obliges them to ſuffer miſeries and affronts? ſuch are mens thoughts of humility, which God loves ſo much, that we may ſay he ſent his own Son from heaven, to teach and recommend it. but if we ponder the matter, we ſhall find, that arrogancy and pride are the iſſues of baſe and ſilly minds, a giddineſs incident to thoſe who are raiſed ſuddenly to unaccuſtomed height: nor is there any vice doth more palpably defeat its own deſign, depriving a man

of that honour and reputation which it makes him aim at.

On the other hand, we ſhall find humility no ſilly and ſneaking quality; but the greateſt height and ſublimity of the mind, and the only way to true honour: 'Before deſtruction the heart of man is 'haughty, and before honour is humility.' lowlineſs is the endowment of high-born and well-educated ſouls, who are acquainted with the knowledge of excellent things; and therefore do not doat upon trifles, or admire little things merely becauſe they are their own. they have no ſuch high opinion of riches, beauty, ſtrength, or other the like advantages, as to value themſelves for them, or to deſpiſe thoſe who want them: but they ſtudy to ſurmount themſelves, and all the little attainments they have hitherto reached, and are ſtill aſpiring to higher and more noble things. and it is worth our notice, "that the moſt deep "and pure humility doth not ſo much "ariſe from the conſideration of our "faults and defects, (though that alſo "may have its own place), as from a

" calm contemplation of the divine per-
" fections. by reflecting on ourſelves,
" we may diſcover ſomething of our own
" ſinfulneſs and miſery; and thereby be
" filled with a kind of boiſterous and
" turbulent grief and indignation: but,
" by fixing our eyes on the infinite great-
" neſs and holineſs of God, we are moſt
" fully convinced of our own meanneſs.
" this will ſink us to the very bottom of
" our beings, and make us appear as no-
" thing in our own ſight, when beheld
" from ſo great a height." and this is re-ally the greateſt elevation of the ſoul; and there is nothing in the world ſo noble and excellent as the ſublimity of humble minds.

Another objection againſt the excel-lency of a religious temper, is, that the love of enemies, and pardon of injuries, which it includeth, is utterly inconſiſtent with the principles of honour. now, tho' it be highly unreaſonable to examine the laws of our Saviour by ſuch rules as this, yet we ſhall conſider the matter a little. nor ſhall we ſeek to elude or qualify this precept, as ſome men do, by ſuch gloſſes

and evaſions as may ſuit with their own practices: nay, we ſhall freely profeſs, that there is no ſalvation without the obſervation of it. a man had even as well abandon Chriſtianity, and renounce his baptiſm, as obſtinately refuſe to obey it. but, if we have any value for the judgment of the wiſeſt man and a great king, he will tell us, that 'it is the 'honour of a man to ceaſe from ſtrife; 'and he that is ſlow to wrath, is of great 'underſtanding.' the meek and holy perſon liveth above the reach of petty injuries; and blunts the edge of the greateſt by his patience and conſtancy; and hath compaſſion towards thoſe who offend him; being more ſorry for the prejudice they do themſelves, than for that which they intended him. and let all the world judge, whether it be more generous to pity and love even thoſe who hate us, and to pardon the greateſt offences, than peeviſhly to quarrel on every petty occaſion, and make men fear our paſſion, hate our humour, and abandon our ſociety? ſo that what is here brought as an objection againſt religion,

might with reaſon enough have been brought as an inſtance of its nobleneſs.

Having thus illuſtrated and confirmed what is aſſerted in the text, that 'the 'righteous is more excellent than his 'neighbour;' let us improve it in a check to that profane and atheiſtical ſpirit of drollery and ſcoffing at religion, which hath got abroad in the world. alas! do men conſider what it is which they make the butt of their ſcoffs and reproaches? have they nothing elſe to exerciſe their wit and vent their jeſts upon, but that which is the moſt noble and excellent thing in the world? what deſign can they propoſe unto themſelves by this kind of impiety? would they have religion baniſhed from the face of the earth, and forced to retire for ſhame? what a goodly world ſhould we then have of it! what a fine harmony and order of things! certainly the earth would then become a kind of hell, with tumults and ſeditions, rapines and murders, ſecret malice, and open frauds, by every vice and every calamity. 'tis only ſome little remainders of piety and virtue in

the world that keep it in any tolerable condition, or make it poſſible to be inhabited. and muſt not thoſe be wretched perſons, and woeful enemies to mankind, who do what they can to reduce the world to ſuch a miſerable condition? but let them do what they will; they but kick againſt the pricks. religion hath ſo much native luſtre and beauty, that, notwithſtanding all the dirt they ſtudy to caſt upon it, all the melancholy and deformed ſhapes they dreſs it in, it will ſtill attract the eyes and admiration of all ſober and ingenuous perſons: and while theſe men ſtudy to make it ridiculous, they ſhall but make themſelves ſo. and O! that they would conſider how dear they are to pay for thoſe dull and inſipid jeſts wherewith they perſecute religion, and thoſe who practiſe it or recommend it! what thoughts they are like to have of them when ſickneſs ſhall arreſt, and death threaten them; when the phyſicians have forſaken them, and the poor deſpiſed miniſter is called in, and they expecting comfort from him they were wont to mock, and perhaps it is little he

can afford them! 'O that they were wiſe, 'and underſtood this, that they would 'conſider their latter end!'

There are others who have not yet arrived to this height of profaneneſs, to laugh at all religion; but do vent their malice at thoſe who are more conſcientious and ſevere than themſelves, under preſumption that they are hypocrites and diſſemblers. but beſides that in this they may be guilty of a great deal of uncharitableneſs, it is to be ſuſpected that they bear ſome ſecret diſlike to piety itſelf, and hate hypocriſy more for its reſemblance of that, than for its own vitiouſneſs: otherwiſe whence comes it that they do not expreſs the ſame animoſity againſt other vices?

Hither alſo may we refer thoſe expreſſions which ſometimes drop from perſons not ſo utterly debauched, but which yet are blaſphemous and profane; that this man is too holy, and that man too religious; as if it were poſſible to exceed in theſe things. what! can a man approach too near to God? can he be too like his maker? is it poſſible to be o-

ver-perfect, or over-happy? I confeſs a man may overact ſome parts of his religion, and be too much in ſome particular exerciſes of it, neglecting other as neceſſary duties. but this is not an exceſs of piety, but a defect of diſcretion. and reaſon would teach us rather to pardon mens infirmities for their pious inclinations, than to blame piety for their infirmities.

Let me therefore intreat you all, eſpecially thoſe whoſe birth and fortunes render them more conſpicuous in the world, to countenance holineſs, which you ſee is ſo excellent; and beware that you do not contribute to that deluge of wickedneſs that overfloweth the earth, by ſcoffing at the moſt ſerious things in the world. and, if I obtain this, I ſhall make bold to beg one thing more, but it is in your own favours; that you would alſo abandon every kind of impiety in your own practice, ſince in it every vile ruffian may vie and contend with you. in other caſes you forſake modes and cuſtoms when they become common. wickedneſs is now the moſt vulgar and

ordinary thing in the world. ſhift, I beſeech you, the faſhion, and embrace piety and virtue; wherein none but excellent perſons ſhall rival you. learn to adore your Maker: and think it not below you to ſtand in awe of him who can rend the heavens, and make the foundations of the earth ſhake; who needs but to withdraw his mercies to make you miſerable, or his aſſiſtance to reduce you to nothing. ſtudy to ennoble your ſouls with ſolid knowledge and true wiſdom; with an eminent greatneſs of mind, and contempt of the world; a great liberty and freedom of ſpirit; an undaunted magnanimity and courage; an extenſive charity and goodneſs; a venerable temperance and purity; an amiable meekneſs and humility: ſo ſhall you render yourſelves honourable, 'and more ex-'cellent than your neighbours' in this world; and be partakers of immortal honour and glory in the world to come. Amen.

THE INDISPENSABLE DUTY OF LOVING OUR ENEMIES.

LUKE vi. 27.

But I ſay unto you which hear, Love your enemies.

WHile we travel through the wilderneſs of this world, much of the comfort of our pilgrimage depends on the good correſpondence, and mutual ſervices and endearments of our fellow-travellers. therefore our bleſſed Saviour, whoſe precepts are all intended for our perfection and felicity, fitted to procure to us both the good things of this world, and that which is to come, has taken eſpecial care to join and unite the minds of men in the ſtricteſt bonds of friendſhip and love. he hath been at great pains by his precepts and by his example, by earneſt perſuaſions and powerful motives, to ſmooth our rugged humours, and calm our paſſions, and take off the roughneſs and aſperity from our natures, which hinders us from join-

ing and cementing together. now, were we to converſe with none but ſuch as are Chriſtians in earneſt, we ſhould find it no hard matter to live in concord and love; we ſhould meet with no occaſion of quarrel and contention; and ſhould only be obliged to love our friends, becauſe all men would be ſuch. but well did our Saviour know, that his part was to be but ſmall in the world; that many would oppoſe the profeſſion, and many more would neglect the practice of that religion which he taught; and that his followers, beſides common injuries incident to others, were to meet with much enmity and hatred for their maſter's ſake: and therefore, that, amidſt all theſe ſtorms, they might maintain that conſtant ſerene tranquillity; that amiable ſweetneſs and benignity of ſpirit, without which they could neither be like him, nor happy in themſelves, he was pleaſed to injoin ſuch an ardent affection and charity towards all men, as no neglect can cool, no injury can extinguiſh. to love thoſe who have obliged us, is that which nature might teach, and wicked

men practiſe; to favour thoſe who have never wronged us, is but a piece of common humanity: but our religion requires us to extend our kindneſs even to thoſe who have injured and abuſed us, and who continue to do and wiſh us miſchief; and that we never deſign any other revenge againſt our moſt bitter and inveterate enemies, than to wiſh them well, and do them all the good we can, whether they will or not: for unto 'thoſe that hear him,' our Saviour ſaith, 'Love your enemies.'

But, alas! how little is this minded by the greater part of thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians! other precepts are broken and ſlighted, but this induſtriouſly baffled and diſcredited by us. in other caſes we acknowledge our fault, but ſtudy to qualify and excuſe it by the frailty of our nature, or violence of a temptation: (We are all ſinners; it is a fault indeed; but who can help it?) now, though theſe excuſes, God knows, are very frivolous, and will be of no force in the great day of our accounts; yet they imply ſomething of modeſty

and ingenuous acknowledgment; and men may repent and forſake what they already condemn. but in the inſtance of loving enemies, and pardoning offences, many are ſo bold and impudent, that, inſtead of obeying, they quarrel with the law as impoſſible or unjuſt; paſſing ſentence upon that by which themſelves muſt be judged. how unreaſonable is it (ſay they) that we ſhould love thoſe that hate us? what congruity between that act and thoſe objects? can cold ſnow produce heat, or enmity beget affection? muſt we be inſenſible of the injuries we meet with, or reward him that offers them? muſt we diſſolve the principles of our nature, and ceaſe to be men, that we may become Chriſtians? theſe, and ſuch like, are either the expreſſions or thoughts of too many among us; and either Chriſt muſt come down in his offers, and remit ſomewhat of the rigour of his laws, or elſe all the promiſes of the goſpel, all the pleaſures of the other world, ſhall not engage them to his obedience. they will rather chuſe to burn in eternal flames of fury and diſcord,

than live at peace with thoſe that have wronged them.

It can therefore never be unſeaſonable to preſs a duty ſo very neceſſary, yet ſo much neglected. the text I have choſen for this purpoſe, is very plain and clear: 'Love your enemies.' but, becauſe many do ſtrain the precept to ſome ſuch ſenſe as may ſuit with their own practice, we ſhall firſt ſearch into the importance of it, and then perſuade you to perform it. the full meaning and importance of the precept will appear, if we conſider, 1ſt, who they are whom we are commanded to love; and, 2dly, wherein the love we owe them does conſiſt.

The perſons whom we are commanded to love, are called our Enemies. and, leſt we ſhould miſtake them, they are clearly deſcribed in the following words. the fountain of their enmity is within. they are thoſe 'who hate us;' who envy our happineſs, who wiſh our miſery, and abhor our perſons and ſociety. but, were this fire kept within their breaſt, it might well ſcorch themſelves, it could not prejudice us: but 'out of the abundance of

'the heart the mouth ſpeaketh;' their malice doth ſharpen their tongues. they are further deſcribed as thoſe that 'curſe us;' they vent their wrath in oaths and imprecations, ſecret calumnies, and open reproaches. nor are their hands always bound up; they 'uſe us deſpitefully,' and procure us miſchief. now, if our love muſt be extended to all theſe, we ſhall hardly find any whom we dare ſafely exclude. of our private enemies there can be no queſtion. but what ſhall be ſaid of the enemies of our country, and of our religion? firſt, for the enemies of our country, I ſee no warrant to exclude them from our charity. we may indeed lawfully oppoſe their violent invaſion, and defend our rights with the ſword, under the banner of the public magiſtrate, to whom ſuch authority is committed: but all this may be done with as little malice and hatred as a judge may puniſh a malefactor; the General may be as void of paſſion, as a Lord Chief Juſtice; and the ſoldier, as the excutioner. but charity will oblige a prince never to have recourſe to the ſword, till

all other remedies fail; to blunt the edge of war, by ſparing as much as may be the ſhedding of innocent blood, with all other barbarities that uſe to accompany it; and to accept of any reaſonable capitulation.

We come next to the enemies of our religion. and indeed there are many who are ſo far from thinking them to be among the number of thoſe whom they are obliged to love, that they look upon it as a part of their duty to hate and malign them. their zeal is continually venting itſelf in fierce invectives againſt Antichriſt, and every thing they are pleaſed to call Antichriſtian: and they are ready to apply all the prophecies and imprecations of the Old Teſtament, in their very prayers, againſt thoſe that differ from them. and ordinarily the animoſities are greateſt where the differences are leaſt; and one party of a reformed church ſhall be more incenſed againſt another, than either againſt the ſuperſtition and tyranny of Rome, or the carnality of the Mahometan faith. yea, perhaps, you may find ſome who

agree in opinion, and only differ in ſeveral ways of expreſſing the ſame thing, and yet can ſcarce look on one another without diſpleaſure and averſion. but, alas! how much do theſe men diſparage that religion for which they appear ſo zealous! how much do they miſtake the ſpirit of Chriſtianity! are the perſons whom they hate, greater enemies to religion, than thoſe who perſecuted the apoſtles and martyrs for profeſſing it? and yet theſe were the perſons whom our Saviour commanded his diſciples to love: and himſelf did pray for thoſe that crucified him; and ſeverely checked the diſciples, when, by a precedent brought from the Old Teſtament, they would have called for fire from heaven on thoſe who would not receive them; telling them, 'they knew not what ſpirit 'they were of:' i. e. they did not conſider by what ſpirit they were prompted to ſuch cruel inclinations; or, as others explain it, they did not yet ſufficiently underſtand the temper and genius of Chriſtianity; which is 'pure and peace-'able, gentle and meek; full of ſweet-

'neſs, and full of love.' if men would impartially examine their hatred and animoſities againſt the enemies of their religion, I fear they would find them proceed from a principle which themſelves would not willingly own. pride and ſelf-conceit will make a man diſdain thoſe of a different perſuaſion; and think it a diſparagement to his judgment, that any ſhould differ from it. mere nature and ſelf-love will make a man hate thoſe who oppoſe the intereſt and advancement of that party which himſelf has eſpouſed. hence men are many times more diſpleaſed at ſome ſmall miſtakes in judgment, than the greateſt immoralities in practice; yea, perhaps, they will find a ſecret pleaſure, and wicked ſatisfaction, in hearing or reporting the faults or ſcandals of their adverſaries. certainly the power of religion, rightly prevailing in the ſoul, would mould us into another temper: it would teach us to love and pity, and pray for the perſon, as well as hate and condemn the errors they are ſuppoſed to eſpouſe: it would make us wiſh their converſion,

rather than their confuſion; and be more deſirous that God would fit them for another world, than that he would take them out of this. we may indeed wiſh the diſappointment of their wicked purpoſes; for this is charity to them, to keep them from being the unhappy inſtruments of miſchief in the world: but he that can wiſh plagues and ruin to their perſons, and delights in their ſins, or in their miſery, hath more of the devil than the Chriſtian.

Thus you have ſeen who thoſe enemies are to whom our charity muſt be extended. it follows to be conſidered, what is the nature of the love we owe them. I ſhall not now ſpend your time in any nice or curious ſpeculations about the nature of this maſter-paſſion. it is the prime affection of the ſoul, which gives meaſures, and ſets bounds to all the reſt; every man's hatred, grief, and joy, depending upon, and flowing from his love. I ſhall now only obſerve to you, that there is a ſenſible kind of love, a certain tenderneſs and melting affection implanted in us by nature to-

wards our neareſt relations, on purpoſe to engage us to thoſe peculiar ſervices we owe them; and there is an intimacy and delightful union betwixt friends, ariſing from ſome eſpecial ſympathy of humours, and referring to the maintenance of ſuch correſpondencies. theſe are not always at our command; nor are we obliged to love either ſtrangers or enemies at this rate. it is not to be expected, that at firſt ſight of a perſon who hath nothing ſingularly taking, we ſhould find ſuch a ſpecial kindneſs and tenderneſs ariſing for him in our hearts; much leſs can fondneſs and paſſionate affection proceed from the ſenſe of any harm received from him. the command in the text does not amount to this, (though there be a great advantage in a tender and affectionate diſpoſition, both to ſecure and facilitate our duty); but we are certainly obliged to ſuch a ſincere and cordial good-will to all men, as will incline us to perform all the good offices we can, even to thoſe who have offended us. but the nature and meaſures of this love will more fully

appear, if we conſider what it does exclude, and what it does imply.

Firſt, then, it excludes all harſh thoughts and groundleſs ſuſpicions. the apoſtle telleth us, that 'charity thinketh 'no evil; that it hopeth all things, be-'lieveth all things.' to entertain, with pleaſure, every bad report of thoſe who have offended us, and to put the worſt conſtruction on their doubtful actions, is both a clear evidence of our hatred, and an unhappy method to continue it. were once the love we recommend ſeated in the ſoul, it would ſoon caſt out thoſe reſtleſs jealouſies, ſour ſuſpicions, harſh ſurmiſes, and imbittered thoughts; and diſplay itſelf in a more candid and gentle diſpoſition; in fair gloſſes, and friendly cenſures; in a favourable extenuation of greater faults, and covering of leſſer. it would make a man interpret all things in the beſt meaning they are capable of; and chuſe rather to be miſtaken to his own prejudice, by a too favourable opinion, than to his neighbour's, by a groundleſs jealouſy. and

even in this ſenſe it may be, that 'cha-'rity covereth a multitude of ſins.'

Again, the love which we owe to enemies, excludes all cauſeleſs and immoderate anger: 'it ſuffereth long, and 'is not eaſily provoked; endureth all 'things.' our Saviour tells us, that 'whoſo is angry with his brother with-'out a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the 'judgment;' and if his anger exceed the cauſe, he is equally guilty. all anger is not vitious; we may be angry, and not ſin. this paſſion, as all others implanted in us by God, is innocent when kept within its due bounds: it has its proper office in the mind, as the ſpleen in the body; but its exceſs and diſtemper ſwells into a diſeaſe. to make it allowable, it muſt not exceed the value of the cauſe, nor the proportion of the circumſtances. it muſt be governed by diſcretion, and kept within the bounds of reaſon, that it break not forth into indecent expreſſions, or violent and blameable actions. and further, it muſt not be too permanent and laſting; we muſt not let the ſun ſet upon our anger.

Plutarch tells us, that the Pythagoreans were careful to obſerve the very letter of this precept: for if anger had boiled up to the height of an injury or reproach, before ſunſet they would ſalute each other, and renew their friendſhip; they were aſhamed that the ſame anger which had diſturbed the counſels of the day, ſhould alſo trouble the quiet and repoſe of the night, leſt, mingling with their reſt and dreams, it ſhould become prevalent and habitual in them. and, ſure, we owe an infinitely greater deference to the precepts of our bleſſed Saviour, and his holy apoſtles, than they did to their maſter's reaſonings and advices. and though we ſhould not take this precept in its ſtricteſt and literal ſignification, yet this we muſt know, that the ſame paſſion and reſentment which was innocent and rational in its firſt riſe, may become vitious and criminal by its continuance. anger may kindle in the breaſt of a wiſe man, but 'reſts only in the bo-'ſom of a fool.' and this will lead us to a third thing which the precept in our text does condemn.

The love of enemies here commanded, does exclude all rooted malice and rancour, proceeding from the memory and reſentment of injuries, after the prejudice and harm ſuſtained by them is over. certainly there is nothing more contrary to charity, than a peeviſh ruminating and poring on the offences we have met with; and their memories are very ill employed, who ſeldom remember a courteſy, or forget a wrong. it is ordinary for ſome who dare not profeſs intentions of revenge, to expreſs their reſentment in ſome ſuch threatening as this: That they will forgive the injury, but never forget it. I hope they do not mean, they will paſs it at this time, and revenge it afterward. this would but make the ſin the greater, by being more deliberate. is it then that they intend them no harm, but will ceaſe to do them good? this is a lame and imperfect charity; expreſsly contradictory to the precept in the text, injoining us 'to bleſs 'them that curſe us, to do good to them 'that hate us, and to pray for them that 'deſpiteſully uſe us.' nor muſt we expect

the bleſſing of God, if this be all we allow to others; 'for with what meaſure 'we mete, it ſhall be meaſured to us a-'gain.' there is but one way we may lawfully remember an injury; and that is ſo as to be more cautious in truſting one who hath deceived us, or expoſing ourſelves to the power of him who hath wronged us. in this caſe religion does allow and direct us to join the ſerpent's wiſdom with the dove's innocency. but then, I am ſure, it is neither neceſſary nor fit to threaten thoſe who have wronged us, with our reſolutions to remember the injury. we may be as cautious as we pleaſe without it; and thoſe threats do nothing but rankle and diſpleaſe our adverſary, which ought to be no part of a Chriſtian's deſign. a meek and charitable perſon will be loth to have his memory infeſted, and his thoughts ſoured with reſentment of wrongs: and if they occur to his mind, he will make no other uſe of them, than to put himſelf on his guard; unleſs from thence he take occaſion to benefit and oblige the perſon who has offended him,

and, as our text expreſsly directs, to 'do him good, to bleſs and pray for 'him.'

Again, This precept does exclude and prohibit the taking or procuring any revenge. by REVENGE, we mean ſuch a ſimple evil done to our adverſary, as does bring no real benefit or reparation to ourſelves. For certainly it is not unlawful to ſeek the reparation of our own right by an authoriſed judge, nor yet to provide for the public ſecurity by the puniſhment of offenders, unleſs ſome ſpecial circumſtance makes it ſo. this may many times be done without prejudice or hatred, yea with great kindneſs and compaſſion towards the perſon of the offender. but, if we have any charity or love to our adverſaries, we ſhall be really afflicted with the evil that befals them; and therefore will never willingly procure ourſelves that trouble by inflicting it on them. it is an evidence of a wicked and malicious humour, to pleaſe ourſelves in the miſery of another, or delight in an evil that brings us no good. whatever latitude the Jews either had or pretend-

ed to, it is not lawful for us to desire 'eye 'for eye, or tooth for tooth,' unless we could say, that his eye would serve our head, or his hand fit our arm, or his pain allay our torment, which he had procured to us.

From hence we may judge what is to be thought of those who are ready to revenge the smallest injury, even an uncivil expression, with the death of the offender; never being satisfied till they have ventured two lives, and as many souls in the combat: a thing which should not be named among Christians, but with the same detestation we have against the vilest actions; for whatever colours of bravery or gallantry it may be painted with, it is really nothing else than a more specious and formal kind of murder. nor does it differ from the baseſt assassination, save only in this, with the wickedness of attempting another's life it joins the rashness and folly of exposing our own.

Lastly, The love which we owe our enemies, does exclude all supercilious and scornful contempt and neglect of

them. which I mark the rather, becauſe ſome think they have ſufficiently obeyed the precept, if they overlook an injury, as thinking the perſon below their revenge. mean while their corrupt nature reliſhes as much pleaſure in the ſcorn and diſdain of their enemies, as it could in the revenge of the injury: their wicked humours are not ſtarved, but only change their diet. of this nature was the anſwer of the philoſopher, to ſome who incited and provoked him to revenge, 'If an aſs kick me, ſhall I kick 'him again?' this is but a lame and miſhapen charity; it hath more of pride than goodneſs. we ſhould learn of the holy Jeſus, who was not only 'meek, 'but lowly.' we ſhould contemn the injury, and pity the weakneſs, but ſhould not diſdain or deſpiſe the perſons of our enemies. "Charity vaunteth not her-"ſelf, is not puffed up, doth not behave "herſelf unſeemly."

Having thus diſcovered thoſe things which are inconſiſtent with charity, and excluded by the 'love of enemies,' it

remains that we ſhew what it does import and require.

Firſt, then, it imports an inward kindneſs and affection; which if it does not amount to that paſſionate tenderneſs which we have for our near relations and intimate friends, yet it implies a good-will towards them, and friendly concernment in their intereſt. if we love an enemy, we ſhall wiſh his welfare, and rejoice in it, and be unfeignedly ſorry for any diſaſter that befals him; ſo far ſhall we be from rejoicing in his misfortunes. and certainly, had we a right ſenſe of things, we ſhould be more troubled for the harm which our enemy does to his own ſoul by wronging us, than for the prejudice we ſuſtain by him: our compaſſion towards him would diminiſh, if not altogether ſwallow up the reſentment of what we ſuffer from him.

But our kindneſs and good-will towards our enemies muſt not reſt in empty wiſhes, but expreſs itſelf in kind words and friendly actions. when we ſpeak to our enemy, it muſt be in ſuch ſmooth, diſcreet, and obliging terms, as are moſt

like to mollify and gain him; that by 'ſoft anſwers' we may 'turn away his 'wrath,' and ſhun all 'grievous words, 'which ſtir up anger.' when we ſpeak of him, it ſhould be as advantageouſly as we can with truth, concealing or qualifying his faults, and praiſing whatever is good in him. and ſure he muſt be ſingularly bad in whom we can find nothing to commend.

Again, We muſt perform for them all thoſe good offices which their neceſſities call for, and our power can reach. 'Do 'good to them that hate you.' if our 'enemy hunger, we muſt feed him; if 'he thirſt, we muſt give him drink: ſo 'ſhall we heap coals of fire upon his 'head,' to mollify his obdurate temper, and overcome his evil by our good; but not to aggravate his guilt and puniſhment, as ſome miſtake the words: for though that be many times the iſſue, yet ought it not to be any part of our deſign.

Laſtly, Becauſe all that we can do for the good of enemies ſignifies little, we muſt employ our intereſt in the court of

heaven in their behalf, begging of God, that he would turn their hearts to himself and to us, and bleſs them with the pardon of all their ſins, particularly the wrongs they have done to ourſelves, and with all things neceſſary for their preſent welfare, or future happineſs. 'Pray for 'them that deſpitefully uſe you.' And this is the ſureſt evidence of our charity to them. mild words may be deſign'd as a ſnare to intrap them, and courteſy may be done them to ſerve our vanity, or a generous kind of pride; which may make us delight to have our enemy indebted to us, as knowing that it is more glorious in the eyes of the world to raiſe a fallen adverſary, than to trample on him. but it muſt be only obedience to God's commands, and ſincere love to our enemy, which can make us take him into our cloſet, and into our heart; to ſhare our prayers with him, and make him partake of the fruits of our devotion; and to have that ſame concernment for his intereſts as for our own, at once recommending them both to our heavenly Father.

By this time I hope you underſtand the importance of this precept of our Saviour, 'Love your enemies:' it remains, that we exhort you to the performance. and I ſhall begin with an argument, which may be of force to give the firſt aſſault to our rebellious inclinations, and make way for further and more mild perſuaſions; and it ſhall be, the indiſpenſable neceſſity of the duty. we muſt not look upon this as a matter which we may do or omit at pleaſure; nor yet as a counſel of perfection, highly commendable, but not abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation. it is as indiſpenſably required as any other duty of our religion; and he who reſolves not to obey in this inſtance, may renounce his baptiſm, and abandon Chriſtianity. none can eſcape the obligation of the precept, unleſs he be ſo rarely happy as to have no enemies; nor muſt any think to redeem themſelves from this by ſome other performance. let our opinions be never ſo orthodox, and our zeal in maintaining them never ſo fervent; let our prayers be never ſo frequent, and all our diſcourſes

raviſhing; let our other attainments be never ſo great, and our confidence of our ſalvation never ſo ſtrong: yet, if we refuſe to obey this precept, we are none of Chriſt's diſciples; or, in the words of the apoſtle, we may ſay, 'Though I ſpeak 'with the tongues of men and angels; 'though I have the gift of prophecy, and 'underſtand all myſteries, and all know-'ledge; and though I beſtow all my 'goods to feed the poor; yea though I 'give my body to be burned, and have 'not this charity' and love, even to mine enemies, 'it profiteth me nothing.' and our Saviour himſelf tells us in expreſs terms, that unleſs we forgive o-'thers their treſpaſſes, neither will God 'forgive us ours.' yea he hath taught us to pray for pardon, in ſuch terms as imports a dreadful curſe upon ourſelves, if we are malicious and revengeful, while we beg that God would pardon us in the ſame manner that we pardon thoſe who ſin againſt us; ſubſcribing, as it were, with our own hands, and confirming out of our own mouths, that ſentence which ſhall be pronounced againſt us;

for even ſo will ' God forgive us.' i. e. he will take vengeance on us, if we have dealt ſo with others. and as thoſe who do not love their enemies, do beg their own condemnation in prayer; ſo alſo ' they eat and drink' it in the holy ſacrament. and men are commonly ſo far convinced of this, that many chuſe to keep back from the table of the Lord, that they may more freely entertain their animoſities. but, alas! what a folly and madneſs this is! think they to excuſe a ſin by the neglect of a duty? or can they put off death, as they do the participation of the ſacrament? or can they hope to be admitted into the eternal enjoyment of God, if they ſhould die in that malice, which renders them unfit to approach unto him in that holy ordinance? do not deceive yourſelves: never ſhall any enter into thoſe bleſſed manſions, thoſe regions of peace and love, whoſe heart is not firſt inſpired with charity, and ſoftened into a compliance with this very precept. and it were as abſurd, to think that a man may be malicious and revengeful all his days,

and yet go to heaven, there to learn meekneſs and charity, as to think that a man may be luxurious and diſhoneſt in this world, and become temperate, and honeſt, and happy in the other. in a word, whatever ſhifts we may make to deceive ourſelves, the command is clear and expreſs, the ſanction ſevere and peremptory; we have but our choice of theſe two, 'love of enemies,' or 'damnation.'

Nor can this ſeem unreaſonable to any who conſiders, that God is the author of our natures, the creator of all our faculties; and therefore may juſtly rule our inclinations, and diſpoſe of our love and affection: and yet he is content (if I may ſo ſpeak) to bargain with us, and to buy off our natural, or rather wicked reſentments; offering us his own mercy and favour, freedom from hell, and everlaſting happineſs, on this, amongſt other conditions, that we 'love 'our enemies.'

Nay, farther, the duty is in itſelf ſo reaſonable, that the more ſober of the Heathens, who had nothing above rea-

ſon to teach them, have acknowledged it, if not as neceſſary, yet as highly becoming, and an eminent inſtance of a virtuous and generous mind. Plato could ſay, That 'injury is by no means 'to be done, nor to be repaid to him 'that has done it.' and when a malicious perſon ſaid to Zeno 'Let me periſh 'if I don't do you a miſchief;' his anſwer was, 'Let me periſh if I don't re-'concile thee to me.' Antoninus tells us frequently, 'That all reaſonable crea-'tures are born for one another; and 'that it is the part of juſtice to bear 'with others: that it is through igno-'rance they offend us, as not knowing 'the right way to their own happineſs; 'and therefore we ſhould rather inſtruct 'them better, than hate them: that the 'beſt kind of revenge is, not to become 'like them in wickedneſs and malice.' and many other excellent arguments does that Royal philoſopher bring to the ſame purpoſe. and Plutarch gives this as one of the reaſons why God is ſo ſlow in puniſhing wicked perſons, that we may 'learn meekneſs and patience by

'his example;' adding that excellent obſervation, That 'our greateſt happi-'neſs and perfection conſiſts in the imi-'tation of our Maker.

But, to leave the teſtimonies of Heathens, the obligation of this precept of loving our enemies may be deduced from another, which every man will acknowledge to be highly reaſonable, the 'doing to others what we would have 'done to ourſelves.' every one of us deſires to be loved and cheriſhed by others; to have our faults pardoned, our failings overlooked, and our neceſſities ſupplied. or, if any be ſo haughty and ſtubborn, that they diſdain a courteſy from an enemy; yet I hope there is none ſo mad, but he deſires the favour of God; whoſe hatred he deſerves infinitely more, than his moſt bitter enemy can deſerve his. how then can we think it unreaſonable, to allow that to others, which ourſelves expect and deſire? Can we look that 'our maſter ſhould forgive us ten 'thouſand talents,' if we take 'our fel-'low-ſervant by the throat, and hale him into priſon for one hundred pence?'

or with what confidence can we ſay, 'Pardon our ſins,' unleſs we be willing to add, that 'we pardon thoſe who ſin 'againſt us?' certainly, if it is reaſonable to ſeek pardon, it is juſt and equitable to give it: and nothing but blind ſelfiſhneſs, and extravagant partiality, can teach us to make ſo unreaſonable a difference betwixt ourſelves and others.

Again, The reaſonableneſs of this duty will farther appear, if we compare it with that malice and revenge which it does oppoſe. can there be any thing more againſt natural reaſon, than to delight in an evil which can bring no benefit to us? yet this is the very nature and eſſence of revenge: for, if the damage we ſuſtain can be repaired, it is no revenge to ſeek it; and, if it cannot, it does no way alleviate the evil of the accident, that we draw him that cauſed it into as great a miſery: nay, unleſs we are unnatural, and without bowels, it will augment our trouble to ſee any evil befal him. and he is a miſerable perſon indeed, whoſe delight is in miſchief, whoſe good is the evil of his neighbour.

yea, I may ſay, that he who returns an injury, is many times more unreaſonable than he who offered it: for he who firſt wrongs another, hath commonly ſome temptation of advantage by it; which revenge cannot pretend to. but if he has done it out of mere malice, yet he is not worſe than the other who returns it; there being as much phantaſtic pleaſure in ſpite, as in revenge: both are alike miſerable and extravagant.

And who are they againſt whom we bend our malice and revenge? are they not men, partakers of the ſame nature, deſcended from the ſame ſtock with ourſelves, fellow-citizens with us in this world, and with whom we ſhould hope to live for ever in a better? and ſhould we not bear much with thoſe who are ſo nearly related to us? nay more, they are the workmanſhip of God's hands, and, for any thing we know, either are, or may become his children and friends: and dare we pretend any love to God, if we do not ſpare them for HIS ſake? and, laſtly, if they have done us any real wrong, they are in ſo far fooliſh, and

deſtitute of reaſon: and who would quarrel with a madman? certainly an injurious perſon knows not what he is doing; for he can never wound his neighbour but through his own ſides, nor prejudice another in a trifling intereſt, without hazarding his own eternal concernment; and therefore he deſerves our pity rather than our hatred.

Much more might be brought to demonſtrate the reaſonableneſs of what our Saviour calls for in the text: but I hope what has been already ſaid may ſuffice to ſtop the mouths of malicious and revengeful men, who are ready to quarrel with it. and, if this or any other duty ſeem abſurd or unreaſonable to us, we may learn the cauſe from the apoſtle, 'The carnal man receiveth not the 'things of the Spirit of God: for they 'are fooliſhneſs unto him' ‡. it is the carnality of our heart that makes it ſeem ſo: and therefore, inſtead of diſputing the duty, let us endeavour to purify our ſouls, and open the eyes of our mind; and we ſhall find it to be true, which Wiſdom ſaith of her doctrines, 'They

‡ I Cor. ii. 14.

'are all plain to him that underſtand-
'eth, and right to them that find know-
'ledge.'

But, in the third place, the love of enemies is not only neceſſary and reaſonable, but alſo amiable and delightful; it hath a great deal of pleaſure and ſweetneſs in it. of this, I confeſs, the greateſt evidence muſt be had from the experience and practice of it; the nature even of earthly pleaſures being ſuch, that only the enjoyment can make a man know them. but, though the full knowledge hereof require a nearer acquaintance, yet even thoſe who look at a diſtance, may perceive ſomething of amiableneſs in it, eſpecially comparing it with the trouble and uneaſineſs of that vice it would deliver us from. malice and revenge are the moſt reſtleſs and tormenting paſſions that can poſſeſs the mind; they keep it in continual hurry and diſorder; they gnaw a man's heart with anguiſh and vexation, and embitter all his enjoyments; they marr the pleaſures of the day, and interrupt the repoſe of the night. Solomon deſcribes theſe men,

'They ſleep not except they have done 'miſchief: and their ſleep is taken a-'way except they cauſe ſome to fall ‡.'

On the other hand, the meek and peaceable man, whoſe mind is brought to a compliance with this precept, is above the malice of his enemies. it is not in their power to vex him. amidſt all the aſſaults of injuries and affronts, he is firm as a rock, which no winds can ſhake, no waves remove. he is happy in the calmneſs and ſerenity of his ſpirit; and is ſure either to convert or ſhame his adverſary by his patience and friendly behaviour. and then the conſciouſneſs of performing his duty, and aſſurance of future reward, afford him infinitely more pure and ſolid pleaſure and delight, than any can expect by indulging and gratifying their revengeful humour.

The advantages of this duty will more clearly appear, when we take a view of thoſe prejudices which commonly are entertained againſt it; which ſhall be our next work.

‡ Prov. iv. 6.

Firſt, then, ſome cry out upon this precept as injoining impoſſibilities, doing violence to the very conſtitution of nature, and obliging men to a debt that no man is able to pay. they will tell you, that it is as eaſy to hate ourſelves, as to love our enemies; to love pain, as to bear an injury meekly: fleſh and blood can't endure it. What arrogance and preſumption is this, thus to impeach the divine laws? It is impoſſible; therefore God ſhould not have commanded it. ſuch is their reaſoning. were it not far more rational to argue thus: It is indiſpenſably commanded, therefore it muſt needs be poſſible? and ſo it has been to all good men that ever lived; and ſo it will be, by God's aſſiſtance, to all that make it their ſtudy. 'Fleſh and blood 'cannot do it.' True enough; but then take this into the account, 'Fleſh and 'blood ſhall never enter into the king-'dom of heaven.' it is indeed againſt the propenſion of our corrupt nature; but it is the work of Chriſtians to mortify their corruptions. and if we think it impoſſible, at the command of God, and

for the purchaſe of heaven, to love an enemy, and pardon an injury, how would we bear thoſe hard trials which Chriſtians have ſuffered by the cruelty of perſecutors? whether is it eaſier to ſuffer a wrong, or to 'give our body to 'be burned?' certainly, when we have obeyed this precept, we have not yet 'reſiſted unto blood;' and therefore that obedience can never be impoſſible, ſince harder things may be expected from us. therefore ſeriouſly ſet about the work, and endeavour to bring your minds to a compliance with it; and then your own experience ſhall confute theſe idle pretences, and evince the poſſibility of the performance.

Another prejudice againſt this precept, is, that it ſeems to encourage injuries, by hopes of impunity and reward; giving the delinquent occaſion to expect kindneſs and love, inſtead of the puniſhment which he deſerves; and ſo we ſhould draw upon ourſelves a ſecond injury by not requiting the firſt.

But we have already told you, that this precept does not forbid the exerciſe

of juſtice by thoſe to whom the ſword is committed, when the public ſecurity calls for it. as a parent may at once love and correct his child, ſo may a judge be in charity with the perſon he does puniſh. and though it ſhould be granted, that, by pardoning injuries, we do expoſe ourſelves to new ones; yet would this amount to no more, but that we may ſuffer hardſhips by our obedience to God; which I hope is not enough to diſpenſe with our duty. but truly the matter goes not commonly thus: for if we conſult either our own obſervation, or the experience of others, we ſhall find, that meek and charitable perſons are moſt ſeldom expoſed to injuries, or engaged in troubles. he muſt needs be a deſperately wicked perſon, who will offer a ſecond injury to one who hath requited the firſt with kindneſs and love. ſuch a ſweet diſpoſition will mollify the hardeſt hearts, and charm the moſt froward humours; eſpecially if we carry ourſelves with ſuch prudence and diſcretion, as may teſtify that we are acted by a noble and generous charity, and

not by a ſtupid inſenſibility. how often 'does a ſoft anſwer turn away wrath?' and the overlooking of an injury prevent farther trouble, throwing water upon the ſpark before it break forth into a flame? hence, if we look upon meek and quiet perſons, we ſhall ordinarily find them happy in the peace of their families, and favour and kindneſs of all their neighbours: whereas the angry, quarrelſome, and malicious perſon, is an eye-ſore to all about him; his neighbours ſhun him, his ſervants dread him, and all abhor and avoid him. and therefore the obſervation of this precept of our Lord, is ſo far from expoſing us to new injuries, that by the mercy of God it will prove the beſt means to ſecure our tranquillity. peace ſhall be the reward of a peaceable temper.

But, laſtly, ſome will tell us, that the love of enemies, and pardoning injuries, is inconſiſtent with the principles of honour; and will expoſe us to contempt and deriſion. but, alas! to what a ſad paſs are we come, if neither reaſon nor religion may preſcribe the rules of

honour; if our notions of it muſt be taken from the language of the ſons of Belial, of ſtrife and violence; if to imitate the Deity in his moſt glorious attribute of mercy and forgiveneſs, and become 'perfect as our Father which is in hea-'ven is perfect,' be accounted a baſe and diſhonourable thing; and if for this vain imaginary phantaſtic ſhadow of reputation, we will violate all laws, human and divine, and forfeit eternal happineſs! but who are they that will think the worſe of you for your patience? ſome vain empty fools, ſome profane atheiſtical wretches, whoſe judgments are not valuable, nor their praiſe worth the having. or what can they ſay of you, but that you are meek and lowly, imitators of that bleſſed maſter whom we profeſs to ſerve? and why do we own the name of Chriſtians, if we be aſhamed of the ſpirit and life of Chriſtianity? why do we not call ourſelves after the name of Cain, Nimrod, or ſome other angry and revengeful deſtroyer, if we eſteem thoſe qualities more glorious and excellent? but, if we have any deference for

ſo wiſe a man and great a king as Solomon, he will tell us, that ‘ it is the ‘ honour of a man to ceaſe from ſtrife;’ and that ‘ he that is ſlow to anger is bet- ‘ ter than the mighty; and he who ru- ‘ leth his ſpirit, better than he who ta- ‘ keth a city.’

Thus you ſee how unreaſonable thoſe prejudices are which keep men from the practice of this neceſſary duty. it remains now, that we hint at ſome helps for the performance of it.

The Heathens were pretty ingenious in deviſing motives of patience. they would tell us, that ‘ if we were newly ‘ offended, it was too ſoon to reſent it; ‘ if long time ſince, it was too late. if ‘ the offender be too ſtrong for us, it ‘ were folly to contend; if he were too ‘ weak, it were a ſhame. are we offend- ‘ ed by a friend, let us remember our old ‘ friendſhip; if by an enemy, let us do ‘ him a kindneſs, and he will do ſo no ‘ more.’ but Chriſtianity will direct us to better means for compoſing the ſoul into the meekneſs and charity which it does require.

The firſt I ſhall recommend, is humility. let us learn to have low thoughts of ourſelves; and then we both ſhall have fewer enemies, and be more inclined to love them. pride and ſelf-conceit makes us over-rate every petty injury, and inclines us to revenge: but if we conſider what poor contemptible things we are in ourſelves, and what we have deſerved, if not from men, yet from God, whoſe inſtruments they are for our correction, we ſhall be little concerned at what the world calls affronts, and eaſily reconciled to thoſe who have wronged us.

Secondly, Let us learn to have a low eſteem of the preſent world, and all things therein; and this will cut off the occaſions of our hatred and animoſities. men may wrong us in our fortune or reputation; but they cannot rob us of piety and virtue, of the favour of God, and eternal happineſs. and therefore, if our minds be once raiſed above thoſe tranſitory vanities, we cannot meet with injuries worth the reſenting. if we aim at heaven, and the glory of another

world, we ſhall not ſtand to quarrel and contend about any trifling intereſt in our way thither.

Thirdly, The frequent and ſerious thoughts of death, would conduce much to allay our hatred, and diſpoſe us to meekneſs and charity. Naturaliſts tell us, that when ſwarms of bees fight in the air, they are diſperſed, by throwing duſt among them. did we in our thoughts often reflect upon that duſt whereunto we muſt all ſhortly return, we ſhould more eaſily lay down our quarrels and animoſities. while we contend about ſmall things, little do we conſider that death is coming on apace, and will ſwallow up the victor and the vanquiſhed; him that is in the right, and him that is in the wrong. Look back upon the private contentions, or public commotions, which infeſted the world an hundred years ago. where are they who managed them? they are all gone down into the dark and ſilent grave. death hath decided their controverſies, and within a few days it will do ſo with ours, and ſend us all to plead our cauſe

before our great Judge; and it will go ill with us, if we appear there in malice. therefore, why ſhould our hatred be long, ſince our life is ſo ſhort? one would think we ſhould find better employment for the ſhort time we have to ſpend here.

But, laſtly, and above all, let us propoſe to ourſelves the bleſſed example of the holy Jeſus, 'who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatned not; but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly.'

Let us frequently remember what great things he hath done and ſuffered for us poor ſinful wretches; even while 'we were enemies and rebels to him;' how that in all the paſſages of his life, and all the bloody ſcene of his ſufferings, he was acted by that ſame 'charity and love to his enemies' which he calls for at our hands. it was this which moved him to deſcend from heaven, and clothe himſelf with the frailties of our nature, and endure the troubles of a calamitous life, and the pains of a

bitter death, to deliver us from that eternal miſery whereinto we had plunged ourſelves. and may not his goodneſs and mercy to us, mollify our hearts, and overpower the corruption of our revengeful nature, and inſpire us with earneſt deſires and reſolutions to imitate his bleſſed example? after all that he hath done and ſuffered for us, can we be guilty of ſuch a ſhameful ingratitude, as to deny him this poor ſatisfaction and acknowledgment, to pardon an enemy for his ſake? has he 'died for us' when we were 'his enemies,' and ſhall we refuſe to live at peace with ours? remember with what patience he endured 'the contradiction of ſinners againſt 'himſelf;' with what humility he did condeſcend to waſh the feet of that wicked miſcreant, who was at the ſame time reſolved to betray him; with what mildneſs he did bear the ſupine negligence and ſtupidity of his diſciples, who ſlept in the time of his agony. what charity and meekneſs did he evidence toward thoſe who ſought his life! he could have called for legions of angels

to deſtroy them, or made the earth to open her mouth and ſwallow them up: but he would not employ his miraculous power, ſave only for their good, reſtoring a ſervant's ear, and reproving the prepoſterous zeal of him who cut it off. yea, while he hung upon the croſs, and was approaching to the gates of death, all the cruel pains of body, and far more intolerable preſſure of ſpirit which he then ſuſtained, did not leſſen his wonderful tenderneſs and affection for his bloody murderers: 'Father, for-'give them, for they know not what 'they do.' let us be frequent and ſerious in the meditation of theſe things. and if we have any veneration for the example of our Saviour, and any ſenſe of his infinite mercy, this will diſpoſe us to the practice of his precepts, and the obedience of his laws; and particularly the obſervation of this neceſſary, this reaſonable, and delightful duty, that we 'love our enemies.'

THE NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGE OF EARLY AFFLICTIONS.

LAM. iii. 27, 28.

It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. he ſitteth alone and keepeth ſilence, becauſe he hath born it upon him.

THE great difference and contrariety betwixt the maxims of the world, and thoſe which religion doth propoſe, is in nothing more obſervable than in taking the meaſures of happineſs and felicity. the world accounteth him a happy man who enjoyeth a perpetual calm and ſun-ſhine of proſperity; whoſe pleaſant and joyful days are never overcaſt with any cloud, nor his tranquillity interrupted by any diſaſtrous accident; and who was never acquainted with any other change, but that which brought him the new and freſh reliſh of ſtill ſucceeding pleaſures and enjoyments. But religion hath taught us to look upon this as a condition full of danger; much more to be

pitied than envied, to be feared than to be desired. it hath taught us to consider afflictions as instances of the divine goodness, as tokens and pledges of his love; (for 'whom the Lord loveth, he 'chastneth, and scourgeth every son 'whom he receiveth);' and that these severe dispensations are very necessary, and may prove useful and advantageous: 'Blessed is the man (saith the Psal-'mist) whom thou chastenest, O Lord *, &c.; 'It is good for me that I have 'been afflicted; that I may learn thy 'statutes' †. and the prophet in the text, 'It is good for a man that he bear 'the yoke in his youth.' he was at this time loaded with the heaviest weight of trouble and sorrow, what for the public calamities of his nation, and what for his own particular sufferings: 'his eyes 'were running down with rivers of wa-'ter, for the destructions of the daugh-'ter of his people;' they trickled down, and ceased not. Judah was gone into captivity because of affliction: she dwelt among the Heathen, and found no rest;

* Psal. xciv. 12. † Psal. cxix. 71.

all her perſecutors overtook her in the ſtraits. the ways of Zion did mourn, becauſe none came to the ſolemn feaſts; the young and the old were lying on the ground in the ſtreets, the virgins and young men were fallen by the ſword, and the few that remained, were ſtarving for hunger. the people did ſigh, and ſeek bread; they gave their pleaſant things for meat to relieve their ſoul; the children and ſucklings did ſwoon in the ſtreets, their ſoul was poured out into their mother's boſom; the women did eat their fruit, their children of a ſpan long. and the prophet had a large ſhare in theſe calamities, both by his own intereſt, and his compaſſion towards his neighbour: 'I am the man (ſaith he) 'that hath ſeen affliction by the rod of 'his wrath. ſurely againſt me is he tur-'ned; he turneth his hand againſt me 'all the day.'

But after he had thus bemoned himſelf, and given ſome vent to his paſſion and ſorrow, he puts a ſtop to the current that was grown too impetuous, and turns his thoughts another way. he ac-

knowledgeth the juſtice of God's diſpenſations; and that it was a favour that they ſuffered no more: 'This I re-'call into my mind, therefore have I 'hope. it is of the Lord's mercies that 'we are not conſumed, becauſe his com-'paſſions fail not. they are new every 'morning.' nay, when he had further pondered the matter, he finds himſelf indebted to the goodneſs of God, even for the afflictions he endured: 'It is 'good for a man,' &c.

The bearing of the yoke is an eaſy and obvious metaphor, importing the reſtraint of liberty, when our deſires are denied, and we have not our wills, cannot ramble up and down as we pleaſe; and alſo the preſſure of afflictions which gaul and torment us, under which we ſmart and grone. ſuch is the yoke which the prophet tells us it is 'good 'for a man that he bear.' a ſtrange doctrine indeed to fleſh and blood! and O how few do believe it! we judge of things by their outward appearance, and as they affect us at preſent, ('Now no 'affliction or chaſtening ſeemeth for the

'preſent to be joyous, but grievous *;) and we cannot perſuade ourſelves that there is any good in that which we feel to be troubleſome and unpleaſant. but, if we conſult our reaſon and our faith, they will ſoon bring us to the acknowledgment of this truth, that 'affliction 'cometh not forth of the duſt, neither 'doth trouble ſpring out of the ground.' the croſſes we meet with, are not the effects of blind chance; but the reſults of a wiſe and unerring Providence, which knoweth what is fitteſt for us, and loveth us better than we can do ourſelves. there is no malice or envy lodged in the boſom of that bleſſed Being, whoſe name and nature is LOVE. he taketh no delight in the troubles and miſeries of his creatures: 'he doth not afflict willingly, nor 'grieve the children of men.' it were infinitely unworthy of his wiſdom and goodneſs, to pleaſe himſelf in ſeeing ſuch poor creatures as we are, toſſed up and down in the world, to behold our anguiſh, and hear our groans. it is our happineſs and welfare which he deſigns

* Heb. xii. 11.

in all his diſpenſations; and he maketh choice of the moſt proper and effectual means for that end. he ſeeth us wandering out of the way, ready to ruin and undo ourſelves; and firſt he eſſayeth to reduce us by milder and more gentle methods: he trieth our gratitude and ingenuity, by all the endearments of mercy and goodneſs; he draweth us with the cords of love, and with the bands of a man. but if we break all theſe bands aſunder, and caſt away theſe cords from us; if we abuſe his goodneſs, and turn his grace into wantonneſs; then, not only his juſtice, but his love to us, not only his hatred to ſin, but his affection unto us, will oblige him to alter his method, and take the rod in his hand, and try what ſeverity can do. God's deſign in afflicting us is excellently expreſſed by the author to the Hebrews, chap. xii. ver. 10. 'He chaſteneth us for our profit, that we may 'be partakers of his holineſs.' holineſs is the higheſt perfection and greateſt happineſs we are capable of: it is a real participation of the divine nature, the

image of God drawn on the ſoul; and all the chaſtiſements we meet with, are deſigned to reduce us to this bleſſed temper, to make us like unto himſelf; and thereby capable to be happy with him to all eternity. this will more clearly appear, if we reflect on the natural temper of our minds, and the influence which proſperous or adverſe fortune is wont to have upon them.

And, firſt, we are naturally proud and ſelf-conceited; we have an high eſteem of ourſelves, and would have every body elſe to value and eſteem us. this diſeaſe is very deeply rooted in our corrupt nature: it is ordinarily the firſt ſin that bewrays itſelf in the little actions and paſſions of children; and many times the laſt which religion enables us to overcome. and ſuch is the malignity of its nature, that it renders us odious and vile, both in the ſight of God and man. it cannot but be infinitely diſpleaſing to that great and glorious Majeſty, to ſee ſuch ſilly creatures, whom he hath brought forth out of nothing, and who are every moment ready to re-

turn into it again, and have nothing of their own but folly, miſery, and ſin; to ſee ſuch creatures, I ſay, either ſo blind as to value themſelves, or ſo unreaſonable as to deſire others to value them. good men muſt needs hate us for it, becauſe God doth ſo; and evil men hate us for it, becauſe they are proud themſelves, and ſo are jealous of the attempts of others to exalt themſelves, as of that which tendeth to depreſs and diminiſh them. pride alone is the ſource and fountain of almoſt all the diſorders in the world; of all our troubles, and of all our ſins: and we ſhall never be truly happy, or truly good, till we come to think nothing of ourſelves, and be content that all the world think nothing of us. now, there is nothing hath a more natural tendency to foment and heighten this natural corruption, than conſtant proſperity and ſucceſs. the Pſalmiſt, ſpeaking of the proſperity of the wicked, who are not in trouble as others, neither are they plagued like other men, preſently ſubjoineth the effect, 'therefore pride compaſſeth them

'about as a chain' *. ſanctified afflictions contribute to abate and mortify the pride of our hearts, to prick the ſwelling impoſthume, to make us ſenſible of our weakneſs, and convince us of our ſins. thus 'doth God open the ears of men, 'and ſeal their inſtruction, that he may 'withdraw man from his purpoſe, and 'hide pride from man †. And if they 'be bound in fetters, and be holden in 'cords of affliction; then he ſheweth 'them their work, and their tranſgreſſi-'ons that they have exceeded' ‡. afflictions do both put us on the ſearch to find out the offences wherewith we have provoked God, and make us more ſenſible of the heinouſneſs and malignity of their nature: 'I have ſurely heard E-'phraim bemoaning himſelf thus, Thou 'haſt chaſtiſed me, and I was chaſtiſed, 'as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke: 'turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned; 'for thou art the Lord my God. ſurely 'after I was chaſtiſed, I repented; and 'after I was inſtructed, I ſmote upon my

* Pſal. lxxiii. 6. † Job xxxiii. 16, 17.
‡ Job. xxxvi. 8, 9.

'thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even con-
'founded, because I did bear the re-
'proach of my youth' *.

Another distemper of our minds, is our too great affection to the world and worldly things. we are all too apt to set our hearts wholly upon them; to take up our rest, and seek our happiness and satisfaction in them. but God knows, that these may well divert and amuse a while, they can never satisfy or make us happy; that the souls which he made for himself, can never rest, till they return unto him: and therefore he many times findeth it necessary, either to remove our comforts, or imbitter them unto us; to put aloes and wormwood on the breasts of the world, that thereby we may wean our hearts from it, and carry them to the end of their being, the fountain of their blessedness and felicity. the few and little comforts of this life, (saith a person of great quality and worth), notwithstanding all the troubles and crosses with which they are interlarded, are apt to keep the hearts

* Jer. xxxi. 18, 19.

even of good men in too great love of this world. what would become of us, if our whole life ſhould be altogether proſperous and contenting, without any intermixture of croſſes and afflictions? it is too probable we ſhould never look any farther; but conclude, with Peter on the mount of transfiguration, 'Lord, it is good to be here.' as Almighty God hath a very great affection to us, ſo he is very deſirous of our love; not that it bringeth any advantage to him, but becauſe it is our greateſt happineſs and perfection. he beſtoweth his mercies to gain our hearts; but, when we begin to doat on the gifts, and forget the giver, he becomes jealous, and takes them away, that he may not have any rival in our affection. and certainly it is no ſmall advantage to have our hearts in any meaſure looſened from the world, diſintangled from every thing here below. 'quocunque pretio 'bene emitur:' he makes a good purchaſe who obtains it, let it coſt him never ſo dear.

Another bad effect which prosperity is wont to produce in our corrupt natures, is, that it makes us forgetful of God, and unthankful for his mercies. when second causes answer our expectations and desires, we are seldom wont to look beyond them: we never regard the fountain, till the cisterns begin to fail. this it was that made Agur to pray against a plentiful fortune, 'lest I be 'full, and deny thee, and say, Who is 'the Lord?' when the weather is fair, and the sails are filled with a prosperous gale, the rough and stubborn mariners are seldom at their devotion: but when the storm is risen, and the sea begins to swell, and every wave threateneth to devour them; 'then they cry to the 'Lord in their trouble,' as on him who can alone 'deliver them out of their 'distress.' the Psalmist, speaking of their stiff-necked and rebellious predecessors, tells us, that 'when God slew them, 'then they sought him, and they re-'turned and enquired early after him; 'and they remembred that God was 'their rock, and the high God their re-

'deemer' *. 'In their affliction (ſaith 'the Lord by the prophet) they will 'ſeek me early' †. I doubt not a great many devout perſons will acknowledge, that it was ſome affliction or other that firſt taught them to pray. and as afflictions contribute to make us remember our dependence on God, and then excite us to ſeek unto him; ſo alſo they render us more ſenſible of our obligations unto him, and more thankful for the mercies he hath beſtowed on us. we are ſo dull and inſenſible, that we ſeldom value any of the divine mercies, till we find what it is to want them. we put very little value on our food and raiment, and the ordinary means of our ſubſiſtence, unleſs we have been ſometimes pinched with want. we conſider not how much we are indebted to God for preſerving our friends, till ſome of them be removed from us. how little do we commonly prize our health, if we have never had experience of ſickneſs or pain! where is the man who doth ſeriouſly bleſs God for his nightly quiet and re-

* Pſal. lxxviii. 34, 35. † Hoſ. v. 15.

poſe? and yet, if ſickneſs or trouble deprive us of it, we then find it to have been a great and invaluable mercy, and that 'it is God who giveth his beloved 'ſleep.'

Once more, Proſperity rendereth us inſenſible of the miſeries and calamities of others. thoſe 'who were at eaſe in 'Zion, did not grieve for the afflictions 'of Joſeph.' but afflictions do ſoften the heart, and make it more tender and kindly; and we are always moſt ready to compaſſionate thoſe griefs which ourſelves have ſometime endured: the ſufferings of others make the deepeſt impreſſions upon us, when they put us in mind of our own. it is mentioned as a powerful motive to engage the children of Iſrael to be kind and merciful to ſtrangers, that 'they knew very well 'the heart of a ſtranger, having been 'ſtrangers themſelves in Egypt.' now, this tender and compaſſionate temper doth well become a Chriſtian, whoſe duty it is to 'weep with thoſe that weep,' and to have as deep a ſenſe and feeling

of the griefs of others, as he is wont to have of his own.

Theſe and many more advantages do ſanctified and well-improved afflictions bring to a Chriſtian; on the account of which 'it is good for him that he hath 'born the yoke.' but I haſten to that which is mentioned in the text. only by the way (that I may not need to return) let me take notice of the ſeaſon which is here mentioned as the fitteſt for a man to bear affliction: 'It is good 'for a man that he bear the yoke in his 'youth.'

We are all willing to put off the evil day; and, if we muſt needs bear the yoke, we would chuſe to have it delayed till we grow old. we think it ſad to have our morning overcaſt with clouds, to meet with a ſtorm before we have well launched forth from the ſhore. we are wont to indulge and applaud children and young folks in their frolicks and jovial humours; and tell them, they will have time enough for cares and troubles when they grow older: we turn that irony of Solomon's into a ſerious

advice, 'Rejoyce, O young man, in 'thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy 'heart, and the ſight of thine eyes.' but the divine wiſdom, which knoweth what is fit for us, doth many times make choice of our younger years, as the moſt proper to accuſtom us to the bearing of the yoke. and a little conſideration will make us diſcover the advantages of this ſeaſon for ſuffering afflictions; they being at that time moſt neceſſary, moſt tolerable, and moſt advantageous. firſt, I ſay, they are then moſt neceſſary. for youth is the time of our life wherein we are in greateſt danger to run into wild and extravagant courſes: our blood is hot, and our ſpirits unſtayed and giddy; we have too much pride to be governed by others, and too little wiſdom to govern ourſelves. the yoke is then eſpecially needful to tame our wildneſs, and reduce us to a due ſtayedneſs and compoſure of mind. then alſo it is moſt ſupportable. the body is ſtrong and healthful, leſs apt to be affected with the troubles of the mind; the ſpirit ſtout and vigorous, will not ſo eaſily

break and ſink under them. old age is a burden, and will ſoon faint under any ſupervenient load. the ſmalleſt trouble is enough ‘ to bring down grey hairs ‘ with ſorrow to the grave.’ and therefore, ſince we muſt meet with afflictions, it is certainly a favourable circumſtance, to have them at the time of our life wherein we are moſt able to endure them. and, laſtly, the leſſons which afflictions teach us, are then moſt advantageous when we learn them betimes, that we may have the uſe of them in the conduct of our after lives. an early engagement into the ways of religion is a great felicity; and the means whereby this is to be effected, can never be too ſoon adminiſtred. youth is more ſoft and pliable; and evil diſpoſitions are more eaſily cured, before time and cuſtom have hardened us in them. a tree needs little force to bend it when it is young; and there needeth the leſs of the rod, if the child be brought under diſcipline betimes. and thus on many accounts ‘ it is good for a man to bear ‘ the yoke in his youth.’

We proceed to that particular advantage of afflictions which is mentioned in the text: 'He ſitteth alone and 'keepeth ſilence, becauſe he hath born 'it upon him.' the words are capable of a two-fold interpretation, and both ſuit well with the purpoſe: for we may either underſtand them properly, of ſolitude and ſilence; or metaphorically, of patience and quiet ſubmiſſion; both of which are the good effects of ſanctified and well-improved afflictions: and accordingly we ſhall ſay ſomething to both. nature hath made us ſociable creatures: but corruption hath carried this inclination unto exceſs; ſo that moſt perſons think it an intolerable burden to be any conſiderable time alone. though they love themſelves out of meaſure, yet they cannot endure their own converſation; they had rather be hearing and diſcourſing of the moſt naughty and trivial things, than be ſitting alone and holding their peace. outward proſperity heightens this humour. when the heart is dilated with joy, it ſeeketh to vent itſelf in every company. when a

man is free of trouble and cares, he thinks of nothing but how to pleaſe himſelf with variety of diverſions and converſations. croſſes, on the other hand, render a man penſive and ſolitary; they ſtop the mouth, and bind up the tongue, and incline the perſon to be much alone. ſadneſs makes his company diſagreeable to others, and he findeth theirs as little agreeable to him: 'he ſitteth alone and 'keepeth ſilence, becauſe he hath born 'it upon him.' thus the ſame prophet ſaith, 'I ſat not in the aſſembly of the 'mockers, nor rejoiced: I ſat alone be-'cauſe of thine hand*.'

Now, he who conſiders, on the one hand, the guilt we are wont to contract, and the prejudice which we ſuſtain, by too much converſation with others, and, on the other hand, the excellent improvement we may make of ſolitude and retirement, will account it a good effect of afflictions, that they incline and diſpoſe us unto it. in conſidering the evils of frequent converſation, we are not to proſecute the groſſer and more ſcandalous vices of the tongue. it might ſeem

* Jer. xv. 17.

a poor commendation of ſolitude and ſilence, that a man is not ſwearing, or lying, or ſcolding, or talking profanely when he is alone: a man may converſe enough, and keep himſelf free from theſe. we rather chuſe to mention ſuch evils as are wont to be leſs noticed, and can be more hardly avoided.

And, firſt, experience may teach us all, that much converſation doth ordinarily beget a remiſſneſs and diſſolution of ſpirit; that it ſlackeneth and relaxeth the bent of our minds, and diſpoſeth us to ſoftneſs and eaſy compliances. we find it hard enough at any time to compoſe our ſpirits to that ſtayedneſs and ſeverity which religion doth require: but if we be too much in company with others, it is almoſt impoſſible to maintain it. that chearfulneſs and complaiſance which is judged neceſſary to render converſation agreeable, doth eaſily degenerate into levity and ſin: and we are very ready to diſpleaſe our Maker, when we are too intent on pleaſing our friends. this looſe frame and diſſipation of mind, which ſociety doth occaſion, made a good man

complain, ‘ ex hominum conſortio ſem-‘ per venio minus homo : ’ that he always came out of company leſs a man.

Another prejudice we receive by ſociety, is, that it fills our minds with noxious images, and fortifies our corrupt notions and opinions of things. our hearts are naturally too much addicted to the things of the world; we mind them too much, and put too high a value upon them : and the diſcourſes we hear, redouble the temptation, by bringing them continually into our thoughts, and ſetting them off to the greateſt advantage. when we are alone in a ſober temper, and take time to reflect and conſider of things, we are ſometimes perſuaded of the vanity and worthleſſneſs of all thoſe glittering trifles whereunto the generality of mankind are ſo ſadly bewitched : but when we come abroad, and liſten to the common talk, and hear people ſpeak of greatneſs, and riches, and honour, with concern and admiration, we quickly forget our more ſober and deliberate thoughts, and ſuffer ourſelves to be carried away with the ſtream of the

common opinion. and though the effect be not ſo ſudden and obſervable, yet theſe diſcourſes are ſtill making ſome ſecret and inſenſible impreſſions upon us.

Thus alſo is our judgment corrupted about the qualities and endowments of the mind. courage and gallantry, wit and eloquence, and other accompliſhments of this nature, are magnified and extolled beyond all meaſure; whereas humility, and meekneſs, and devotion, and all thoſe Chriſtian graces which render a ſoul truly excellent and lovely, are ſpoken of as mean and contemptible things: for though men have not the impudence formally to make the compariſon, and prefer the former; yet their very air, and way of diſcourſing about theſe things, ſufficiently teſtifies their opinion. with what affection and concernment will they repreſent a gallant or learned man; but how faintly do they utter the character of a good man! and ſo, in cenſuring mens failings, they exaggerate the ſmalleſt inſtances of weakneſs or imprudence, but ſpeak lightly enough of the greateſt crimes. drunkenneſs and whoredom are

mentioned in ſuch terms as expreſs little ſenſe of their heinous nature, and tend to leſſen the horror we ſhould have of them. ambition and revenge, and ſuch other plauſible vices, are rather allowed than condemned. and while we converſe in the world, and are accuſtomed to ſuch repreſentations of things, our judgments are thereby exceedingly corrupted, and we entertain falſe and pernicious maxims. and ſo hard it is to guard ourſelves againſt the contagion, that we had better ſit alone and keep ſilence, than be continually expoſed to the temptation.

I ſhall mention but another of thoſe evils wherewith our converſation is commonly attended. the moſt ordinary ſubject of our entertainments are the faults and follies of others. 'itur in verba, ſermo ſeritur, vita aliena deſcribitur:' we meet and talk, and fall to deſcribe the life and deportment of others. were this one theme of diſcourſe diſcharged, we would oft-times find but little to ſay. I ſcarce know any fault whereof good perſons are ſo frequently guilty, and ſo little ſenſible. they know perhaps the

things are true, and they have no malicious design in reporting them; they tell them only as they do the publick news, to divert themselves, and gratify their friends. but, would we consult our own hearts, and apply the great rule of righteousness, of doing unto others as we would be done unto ourselves, we should soon be convinced of a great deal more guilt and sinfulness in such discourses than we are wont to apprehend. how ill do we take it to have our own failings thus exposed, and to hear that any person hath made as bold with us as we are wont to make with others? again, how loth would we be, that the persons of whom we speak so freely, should overhear our discourse, or be informed of it? now, if the practice had nothing blameable in it, why should we be so shy to avow it?

I have only hinted at these things: but he who shall seriously ponder them, will acknowledge, there is no little prejudice even in those entertainments which pass for very innocent in the world; and that he shunneth much guilt and many snares who 'sitteth alone and

'keepeth ſilence.' but ſolitude and retirement do not only deliver us from theſe inconveniences, but alſo afford very excellent opportunities for bettering our ſouls. thoſe hours we miſpend in needleſs viſits and idle talk, if rightly improved, might ſet us a great way forward on our journey to heaven. while we are too buſy in making or entertaining acquaintance with men, we many times fall out of acquaintance both with God and ourſelves.

The moſt profane and irreligious perſons will find ſome ſerious thoughts riſe in their minds if they be much alone, and the more that any perſon is advanced in piety and goodneſs, the more will he delight in retirement, and receive the more benefit by it. then it is that the devout ſoul takes its higheſt flight in divine contemplations, and maketh its neareſt approaches to God. I find the vulgar Latin rendereth the words of the text, 'ſedebit ſolitarius et tacebit, quia 'levavit ſe ſupra ſe: the ſolitary perſon 'will ſit ſtill and hold his peace, becauſe 'he hath lifted up himſelf above himſelf;'

raiſed his ſpirit above its ordinary pitch. 'in ſolitudine (ſaith one of the fathers) 'aer purior, coelum apertius, familiari-'or Deus: in ſolitude we breathe, as it 'were, in a purer air, heaven is more o-'pen unto us, and God is more familiar 'and frequent in his viſits.' to which purpoſe ſome have applied that of the Prophet Hoſea, 'behold, I will allure her, 'and bring her into the wilderneſs, and 'there ſpeak comfortably unto her;' or, as the original importeth, 'I will ſpeak 'unto her heart.' that rule which our Saviour giveth for our devotion, 'to en-'ter into our cloſet, and ſhut the door 'behind us,' is as neceſſary to preſerve us from diſtraction, as from vanity and oſtentation. when we have retired as much as we can from the world, we do ſtill carry too much of it along with us. the images of things do ſufficiently perſecute and diſturb us, though we be not expoſed to the objects themſelves. our bleſſed Saviour thought not the mountains and deſarts retired enough for his devotions; but would add the darkneſs and ſilence of the night. little doth the

world underſtand thoſe ſecret and hidden pleaſures which devout ſouls do feel, when, having got out of the noiſe and hurry of the world, they ſit alone and keep ſilence, contemplating the divine perfections, which ſhine ſo conſpicuouſly in all his works of wonder; admiring his greatneſs, and wiſdom, and love, and revolving his favours towards themſelves; opening before him their griefs and their cares, and disburdening their ſouls into his boſom; proteſting their allegiance and ſubjection unto him, and telling him a thouſand times that they love him; and then liſtening unto the voice of God within their hearts, that ſtill and quiet voice, which is not wont to be heard in the ſtreets, that they may hear what God the Lord will ſpeak: for he will ſpeak peace unto his people, and to his ſaints, and viſit them with the expreſſions of his love. no wonder if thoſe bleſſed ſouls who have taſted the pleaſures of holy retirement, and found themſelves, as it were, in the ſuburbs of heaven, grow weary of company and affairs, and long for the returning of thoſe

happy hours, as the hireling for the ſhades of the evening: no wonder they pity the fooliſh buſy world, who ſpend their days in vanity, and know not what it is indeed to live.

But here I would not be miſtaken, as if I recommended a total and conſtant retirement, or perſuaded men to forſake the world, and betake themſelves unto deſarts. no, certainly; we muſt not abandon the ſtations wherein God hath placed us, nor render ourſelves uſeleſs to mankind. ſolitude hath its temptations, and we may be ſometimes very bad company to ourſelves. it was not without reaſon that a wiſe perſon warned another, who profeſſed to delight in converſing with himſelf, 'vide ut cum homine probo: have a care that you be 'keeping company with a good man.' abuſed ſolitude may whet mens paſſions, and irritate their luſts, and prompt them to things which company would reſtrain. and this made one ſay, that 'he who is 'much alone, muſt either be a ſaint or a 'devil.' melancholy, which inclines men moſt to retirement, is often too much

nouriſhed and fomented by it; and there is a peeviſh and ſullen lonelineſs, which ſome people affect under their troubles, whereby they feed on diſcontented thoughts, and find a kind of perverſe pleaſure in refuſing to be comforted. but all this ſays no more, but that good things may be abuſed; and exceſs or diſorder may turn the moſt wholſome food into poiſon. and therefore, though I would not indifferently recommend much ſolitude unto all; yet, ſure, I may ſay, it were good for the moſt part of men that they were leſs in company, and more alone.

Thus much of the firſt and proper ſenſe of 'ſitting alone and keeping ſi-'lence.' we told you it might alſo import a quiet and patient ſubmiſſion to the will of God; the laying of our hand on our mouth, that no expreſſion of murmur or diſcontent may eſcape us. 'I 'was dumb,' ſaid the Pſalmiſt, 'I open-'ed not my mouth; becauſe thou didſt 'it *.' and the prophet deſcribeth our Saviour's patience, that 'he was oppreſ-

* Pſalm xxxix. 9.

'ſed, and was afflicted, yet he opened 'not his mouth: he was brought as a 'lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep 'before the ſhearers is dumb, ſo he o-'pened not his mouth' †. indeed a modeſt and unaffected ſilence is a good way to expreſs our ſubmiſſion to the hand of God under afflictions. the Heathen moraliſts, who pretended much to patience, could never hold their peace; but deſired always to ſignalize themſelves by ſome fetches of wit, and expreſſions of unuſual courage. but certainly the mute and quiet Chriſtian behaveth himſelf much better. 'loquaciſſimum illud ſi-'lentium:' that eloquent and expreſſive ſilence ſaith more than all their vain and Stoical boaſtings. we cannot now inſiſt in any length on this Chriſtian duty of patience, and ſubmiſſion to the will of God; we ſhall only ſay two things of it, which the text importeth. firſt, that this leſſon is moſt commonly learned in the ſchool of afflictions: 'he ſitteth alone 'and keepeth ſilence, becauſe he hath 'born it upon him.' in that fore-cited

† Iſa. liii. 7.

place of Jeremiah xxxi. 18. 'Ephraim 'bemoning himſelf, acknowledgeth that 'he had been as a bullock unaccuſtomed 'to the yoke;' which maketh the greater reluctancy againſt it. children that are much indulged, are the more impatient if they come to be croſſed; and there is too much of the child in us all. the Apoſtle tells us, that 'tribulation worketh pati-'ence'*. cuſtom makes every thing more tolerable unto us; and if it pleaſe God to ſanctify the firſt ſtroke, the ſecond is received with the greater ſubmiſſion. the other thing I have to ſay on this duty, is, that this advantage of afflictions is very great and deſirable; that it is indeed 'very good for a man to have borne the 'yoke in his youth,' if he hath thereby learned 'to ſit alone and keep ſilence 'when the hand of the Lord is upon 'him.' there is nothing more acceptable unto God, no object more lovely and amiable in his eyes, than a ſoul thus proſtrate before him, thus entirely reſigned unto his holy will, thus quietly ſubmitting to his ſevereſt diſpenſations. nor is it leſs advantageous unto our-

* Rom. v. 3.

ſelves; but ſweeteneth the bittereſt occurrences of our life, and makes us reliſh an inward and ſecret pleaſure, notwithſtanding all the ſmart of affliction: ſo that the yoke becomes ſupportable, the rod itſelf comforts us; and we find much more delight in ſuffering the will of God, than if he had granted us our own.

Now, to this God who loveth us, and correcteth us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holineſs, and thereby of his happineſs; to God the Father, Son, and bleſſed Spirit, be all honour, praiſe, and glory, now and for ever. AMEN.

THAT THERE ARE BUT A SMALL NUMBER SAVED.

LUKE xiii. 23.

Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, &c.

THOSE who have so much charity and goodness as to be nearly touched with the interest of mankind, cannot but be more especially concerned about their everlasting condition; and very anxious to know what shall become of poor mortals when this scene is over, and they cease to appear on the stage of the world, being called off to give an account of their deportment on it. and, seeing we are assured that there are different, and very opposite estates of departed souls, some being admitted into happiness, and others doomed to misery, beyond any thing that we can conceive; this may put them upon farther inquiry, How mankind is like to be divided? whether heaven or hell

ſhall have the greater ſhare? ſuch a laudable curioſity as this it was, that put one of our bleſſed Saviour's followers to propoſe the queſtion in the text, 'Lord, 'are there few that be ſaved?' our Saviour had been lately foretelling the great ſucceſs the goſpel ſhould have; how, like a little leaven that quickly fermenteth the whole lump it is put into, Chriſtianity ſhould ſoon propagate itſelf through the world, and many nations embrace the profeſſion of it. this diſciple, it ſeems, was deſirous to know, whether the efficacy ſhould be anſwerable to the extent? whether it ſhould take as deep root in the hearts of thoſe that owned it, as it was to ſpread itſelf far and wide on the face of the earth? in a word, whether the greateſt part of men were to be ſaved by it? I called this a laudable curioſity; and there is reaſon to think it ſo, ſince our Saviour himſelf, who beſt knew the occaſion and importance of it, doth not check, but ſatisfy the inquiry, which he was not wont to do when the queſtions were uſeleſs or blameable. thoſe who inquired into the time of the general

judgment, received no other account, but that it was 'inter arcana imperii;' among thoſe ſecrets which God reſerved for himſelf. and, again, when they asked 'of the time that the kingdom ſhould be 'reſtored unto Iſrael,' he tells them roundly, it was not for them, it concerned them not at all to know ſuch things as theſe. but here, as the queſtion ſeems to have proceeded from a zeal to the honour of God, and concernment in the happineſs of mankind; ſo the reſolution of it might be very uſeful: and accordingly it is improved by our Saviour; who at once reſolves the doubt, and preſſeth a very weighty exhortation, in the following words, 'ſtrive to enter in' &c. We are not at this time to proſecute the whole importance of this latter verſe; for that we refer you to an excellent ſermon, intitled, The Way to Happineſs. we ſhall only conſider the anſwer which is implied in it to the foregoing queſtion; to wit, that the number of thoſe who are to be ſaved is really very ſmall.

It is on this point we deſign to fix

our meditations at this time. and indeed there is ſcarce any doctrine that needeth to be more inculcated: for, amongſt all the ſtratagems whereby the great enemy of mankind doth plot and contrive their ruin, few are more unhappily ſucceſsful, than the fond perſuaſion he hath filled them with, that heaven and everlaſting happineſs are eaſily attainable. what one ſaith of wiſdom, 'multi ad ſapientiam 'perveniſſent niſi putaſſent ſe perveniſſe,' we may, with a little alteration, apply unto this purpoſe; that many might have reached heaven if they had not been ſo confident of it. the doors of the Chriſtian church are now very wide, and men have acceſs unto them upon eaſy terms: nay this privilege deſcends unto men by their birth, and they are reckoned among Chriſtians before they come well to know what it means. The ordinances and myſteries of our religion are common to all, ſave thoſe whom groſs ignorance or notorious crimes do exclude. there are no marks on the foreheads of men whereby we can judge of their future condition: they die, and

are laid in their graves, and none cometh back to tell us how it fareth with them; and we desire to think the best of every particular person. but, whatever charity be in this, there is little prudence in the inference that many draw from it, who think they may live as their neighbours do, and die as happily as they; and, since the greatest part of men are such as themselves, heaven must be a very empty place if all of them be debarred. thus perhaps you have seen a flock of sheep on a bridge, and the first leapeth over, and the rest, not knowing what is become of those that went before, do each of them follow their companions into that hazard or ruin. interest and self-love do so strongly blind the minds of men, that they can hardly be put from the belief of that which they would very fain have true. hence it is, that, notwithstanding of all we are told to the contrary, the opinion of the broadness of the way that leads to heaven, and the easy access unto it, is still the most epidemick, and I think the most dangerous heresy. many of the commonalty

are ſo ignorant as to avow it; and the ſtrange ſecurity of more knowing perſons doth as loudly proclaim it. I know he undertakes an unwelcome errand, who goes about to diſpoſſeſs the minds of men of ſuch a pleaſant and flattering error. but what ſhall we do? ſhall we ſuffer them to ſleep on and take their reſt, till the everlaſting flames awake them? ſhall we draw their blood on our heads, and involve ourſelves in their ruin, by neglecting to advertiſe them of their hazard? no, my friends: duty doth oblige us, and the holy ſcriptures will warrant us to aſſure you, that there are very 'few 'that ſhall be ſaved;' that 'the whole 'world lieth in wickedneſs *;' and that 'they are a little flock to whom the 'Father will give the kingdom' †.

That this certain, though lamentable truth may take the deeper impreſſion on our minds, we ſhall firſt propoſe ſome conſiderations for the better underſtanding what great things are required in thoſe who look for everlaſting happineſs, and then reflect on the acti-

* 1 John v. 19. † Luke xii. 32.

ons and ways of men; that, comparing the one with the other, we may see how little ground of hope there is for the greatest part to build on.

First, then, consider the nature of that divine Majesty, whose presence and enjoyment it is that makes heaven itself desirable; and think how inconsistent it is with his infinite holiness, to admit impure and impenitent sinners into the habitation of his glory. certainly 'he is 'of purer eyes than to behold evil, and 'cannot look on iniquity †. He is not 'a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: 'neither shall evil dwell with him. the 'foolish shall not stand in his sight' *. it is strange what conceptions foolish men must entertain of Almighty God, who can imagine, that those who have been all their days wallowing in sin, shall be admitted into an everlasting fellowship with him. sooner shall light and darkness dwell together, and heat and cold in their greatest violence combine, and all the contrarieties of nature be reconciled. can two walk together except they be

† Hab. 1. 13, * Psal. v. 4, 5.

agreed? can there be any converſe betwixt thoſe whoſe natures ſuit ſo ill together? ſure they who think to come ſo eaſily by happineſs, muſt imagine God altogether ſuch a one as themſelves; elſe they could never hope that he would chuſe them, and cauſe them to approach unto him. but O how widely ſhall they find themſelves miſtaken, when he ſhall 'reprove them, and ſet their ſins in or-'der before them:' and they ſhall find to their confuſion, that he is a 'conſuming 'fire to all the workers of iniquity! men are wont to frame a notion of God according to their own wiſhing, as if he were all made up of mercy, and juſtice were but an empty name: and this is the common ſhelter againſt every convincing reproof. but this temerity ſhall at length ſufficiently confute itſelf, and feel that juſtice which it will not believe. there is no ſtrife among the attributes of God, that one of them ſhall ſwallow up another. mercy is open to all that forſake their ſins, but juſtice ſhall ſeize on thoſe who continue in them. that compaſſion which made God to give his

deareſt Son for the redemption of mankind, will never prevail for the pardon and deliverance of any impenitent ſinner. abuſed goodneſs will certainly turn into fury; and infinite mercy, being deſpiſed, ſhall bring down upon ſinners all the dreadful effects of an omnipotent vengeance.

Conſider, ſecondly, what that happineſs is which every body doth ſo confidently promiſe to themſelves; and ſee whether it be likely that it ſhould be ſo eaſily attained. glorious things are every where ſpoken of that heavenly Jeruſalem; and all that is excellent or deſirable in this world, is borrowed to ſhadow it forth in the holy ſcriptures: we are told of crowns, and kingdoms, and treaſures, and rivers of pleaſure, and fountains of living waters, and of an exceeding eternal weight of glory.

But all theſe do not ſuffice to convey into our minds any full apprehenſion of the happineſs we expect; and, after all that can be ſaid, it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be. theſe metaphors and allegories ſerve but to aſſiſt our minds

a little, and give us ſome confuſed apprehenſions of the things 'eye hath not 'ſeen, nor ear heard; nor can it enter 'into the heart of man to conceive, 'what God hath prepared for them that 'love him,' ſaid that beloved diſciple that lay in the boſom of our Saviour. can we then expect that ſo glorious a prize ſhall be gained without any labour? ſhall ſuch a recompenſe be beſtowed on thoſe who never were at any pains about it? what toil and travail doth it coſt a man to gather together that white and yellow earth which they call money? with what care and pains do others aſcend to any degree of preferment? what induſtry and ſtudy do men employ to reach a little knowledge, and be reckoned amongſt the learned? and ſhall heaven and everlaſting happineſs ſlide into our arms when we are aſleep? no, certainly. God will never diſparage the glories of that place, to beſtow them on thoſe who have not thought them worthy of their moſt ſerious endeavours. but as the greatneſs of that happineſs may juſtly diſcourage all the lazy pre-

tenders to it, ſo the nature of it leaves ſmall ground of hope to the greateſt part of the world. I wonder what moſt men do expect to meet with in heaven, who dream of coming thither. think they to feaſt and revel, and luxuriate there, and to ſpend eternity in fooliſh mirth, and vain talk ; in ſport and drollery, and ſenſual pleaſure; which are all the exerciſes they are capable of, or find any reliſh or ſatisfaction in ? away with all thoſe Turkiſh notions, whereby we diſparage the happineſs we pretend to. the joys of that place are pure and ſpiritual, and no unclean thing ſhall enter there. the felicity of bleſſed ſpirits ſtandeth in beholding and admiring the divine perfections, and finding the image of them ſhining in themſelves, in a perfect conformity to the will and nature of God, and an intimate and delightful ſociety and communion with him: and ſhall ſuch ſouls be bleſſed in ſeeing and partaking of the divine likeneſs, who never loved it, and would chuſe any thing rather than to converſe with him ? a little reflexion on the common temper of mens

minds may assure us, that they are very far from that meetness and aptitude, for 'the inheritance of the saints in light'* which the Apostle speaks of. the notion and nature of blessedness must sure be changed, or else the temper of their spirits: either they must have new hearts, or a new heaven created for them, before they can be happy. it is a strange infatuation of self-love, that men in the gall of bitterness should think it is well with their souls, and fancy themselves in a case good enough for the enjoyment of divine pleasures.

In the fourth place, let us reflect on the attempts and endeavours of those who have gone to heaven before us; how they did fight and strive, wrestle and run, for obtaining that glorious prize; and we shall see how improbable it is, that the greatest part of men should come by it with so little pains. Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and all those ancient worthies recorded in holy writ, have either done or suffered so great things, as gave ground to expect that

* Col. i. 12.

country they looked after, 'accounting 'themſelves ſtrangers and pilgrims on 'the earth;' as you may ſee in the 11th chapter of Hebrews: where, after a large catalogue of their excellent performances, the author tells us of others, 'who were tortured, not accepting deli-'verance, that they might obtain a bet-'ter reſurrection. and others had trial of 'cruel mockings, and ſcourgings, yea 'moreover, of bonds and impriſonments. 'they were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſun-'der, were tempted, were ſlain with the 'ſword: they wandered about in ſheep-'skins, and goat-skins; being deſtitute, 'afflicted, tormented: of whom the 'world was not worthy. they wandered 'in deſarts, and in mountains, and in 'dens and in caves of the earth.' ſuch alſo was that holy violence wherewith the Chriſtians of the firſt and golden ages did force open the gates of heaven, and took poſſeſſion of it. the ardent affection wherewith theſe bleſſed ſouls were inflamed towards their Maker and Redeemer, made them willingly give up their bodies to be burned in the fire, for

the glory of God, and the propagation of the Chriſtian faith. their conſtancy in their ſufferings did amaze their bloody perſecutors, and outweary the cruelty of their tormentors : and they rejoiced in nothing more, ‘ than that they ‘ were accounted worthy to ſuffer ſhame ‘ for the name of Jeſus.’ and what ſhall we ſay of their univerſal charity and love, which reached their very enemies? of their humility and meekneſs, juſtice and temperance, and all thoſe other virtues, which many of the Heathens themſelves did obſerve and admire? ‘ behold, ‘ ſaith one, how the Chriſtians love one ‘ another! Theſe are the men, ſaith ano- ‘ ther, who ſpeak as they think, and do ‘ as they ſpeak.’ Pliny, after an exact inquiry, writeth to Trajan the Emperor, ‘ that he could never find any other guilt ‘ in the Chriſtians, but that they met to- ‘ gether before day-break, to ſing a hymn ‘ to Chriſt, as if he were God; and then ‘ to bind themſelves with a ſacrament or ‘ oath, not to do any miſchief; but, on ‘ the contrary, that they ſhall not rob, ‘ ſteal, or commit adultery, or falſify

'their words, or deny their truſt, &c.' this was the crime of Chriſtians in thoſe firſt ages, to engage themſelves not to commit any crime. and if it fell out that any of them were guilty of drunkenneſs, or uncleanneſs, or any other of thoſe ſins, which, alas! are ſo lightly cenſured in our days, they were ſeverely puniſhed: nay, how bitterly did themſelves lament it! they needed not in thoſe days to be purſued by tedious proceſſes, or dragged againſt their will to the profeſſion of their repentance. they would ſue for it with tears, and ſtand many years at the door of the church, begging to be received. the cenſures of the church were then looked upon as very ſerious and dreadful things: and they who would encounter death in the moſt terrible form, would tremble if threatened with excommunication. now, tell me, I pray you, what you think of theſe men? did they ſupererogate, and go beyond their duty? or were they fools in doing theſe things, when half the pains might have ſerved the turn? did heaven and happineſs coſt them ſo

much labour, and think you to be carried faſt aſleep, or rather while you are bending your forces quite another way? if you cannot look ſo far back, or if you imagine theſe but romances, like the poetick accounts of the golden age, wherein all men were happy and good, I ſhall then deſire you to take notice of a few perſons, whom the divine goodneſs hath reſcued from that deluge of wickedneſs which overfloweth the world. there are perhaps ſome two or three in a city, or in a country, who live very far beyond the common rate of men, and may be accounted angels upon earth, if compared with them. they have eſcaped the pollution that is in the world, and have learned to deſpiſe all the vanities of it; their affections are above, and their greateſt buſineſs is, to pleaſe and ſerve their Maker; their thoughts and affections are in a great meaſure holy and pure, their converſe innocent and uſeful, and in their whole deportment they obſerve ſuch ſtrict rules of holineſs and virtue, as others may think needleſs or ſuperſtitious: and yet theſe very

perſons are deeply ſenſible of their own imperfections, and afraid enough to come ſhort of heaven. I ſpeak not now of thoſe ſcrupulous perſons whom melancholy doth expoſe unto perpetual and unaccountable fears; much leſs of others, who make a trade of complaining, and would be the better thought of for ſpeaking evil of themſelves, and would be very ill pleaſed if you ſhould believe them. I ſpeak of rational and ſober men, whoſe fears ariſe from their due conſideration and meaſures of things, from the right apprehenſions they have of the holineſs of God, and the meaning and importance of the goſpel-precepts. and certainly ſuch holy jealouſies over themſelves ought not to be judged needleſs; ſince St. Paul himſelf, who had been rapt up into the third heaven, and thereby received an earneſt of eternal happineſs, found it neceſſary to take care, 'leſt that by any means, 'while he preached to others, himſelf 'ſhould be a caſt-away*.' I know it is ordinary for men to laugh at thoſe who are more ſerious and conſcientious than

* 1 Cor. ix. 27.

themſelves, to wonder what they aim at, and to hope to be as ſure of heaven as they. but ere long they ſhall diſcover their miſtake, and ſhall ſay, with thoſe ſpoken of in the book of Wiſdom,' This ' was he whom we had ſometimes in de- ' riſion, and a proverb of reproach. we ' fools accounted his life madneſs, and ' his end to be without honour. how is ' he numbred among the children of ' God, and his lot is among the ſaints ! ' therefore have we erred from the way ' of truth, and the light of righteouſneſs ' hath not ſhined unto us, and the Sun of ' righteouſneſs roſe not upon us.'

To come yet cloſer unto our preſent purpoſe, a ſerious conſideration of the laws and precepts of the goſpel, will fully convince us of ' the ſtraitneſs of ' the gate, and narrowneſs of that way ' that leads unto eternal life.' we cannot name them all, nor inſiſt upon any at length. look through that excellent Sermon on the mount, and ſee what our Saviour doth require of his followers. you will find him injoining ſuch a profound humility, as ſhall make us think

nothing of ourſelves, and be content that others think nothing of us; a meekneſs which no injuries can overcome, no affronts nor indignities can exaſperate; a chaſtity which reſtraineth the ſight of the eyes, and the wandering of the deſires; ſuch an univerſal charity as will make us tender other mens welfare as our own, and never to take any revenge againſt our moſt bitter enemies, but to wiſh them well, and to do them all the good we can, whether they will or not. whatever corrupt gloſſes men are bold to put on our Saviour's words, the offering the other cheek to him who ſmote the one, and the giving our coat to him who hath taken our cloak, doth oblige us to ſuffer injuries, and part with ſomething of our right, for avoiding ſtrife and contention. the pulling out our right eye, and cutting off our right hand that offends, doth import the renouncing of the moſt gainful callings, or pleaſant enjoyments, when they become a ſnare unto us, and the uſe of all thoſe corporal auſterities that are neceſſary for the reſtraint of our luſt and

corrupt affections. the hating of father and mother for the ſake of Chriſt, doth at leaſt imply the loving of him infinitely beyond our deareſt relations, and the being ready to part with them when either our duty or his will doth call for it. and we muſt not look upon theſe things as only counſels of perfection, commendable in themſelves, but which may yet be neglected without any great hazard. no, certainly; they are abſolutely neceſſary: and it is a folly to expect happineſs without the conſcientious and ſincere performance of them all. 'whoſoever ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven:' that is, according to all interpreters, 'he ſhall have no intereſt in it.' you ſee then by what ſtrict rules he muſt ſquare his actions, who can with any ground hope to be ſaved. but now I muſt tell you further, that he muſt not be put to the performance of his duty merely by the force and ſanctions of theſe laws. true religion is an inward, free, and ſelf-moving principle;

and thoſe who have made a progreſs in it, are not acted only by external motives, are not merely driven by threatnings, nor bribed by promiſes, nor conſtrained by laws; but are powerfully inclined to that which is good. though holy and religious perſons do much eye the law of God; yet it is not ſo much the authority and ſanction of it, as its reaſonableneſs, and purity, and goodneſs, that doth prevail with them. they account it excellent and deſirable in itſelf, and that 'in keeping of it there is great reward;' and that divine love wherewith they are acted, makes them become a law unto themſelves: 'Quis legem det amanti-'bus? Major eſt amor lex ipſe ſibi.' in a word, what our bleſſed Saviour ſaid of himſelf, is in ſome meaſure applicable to his followers, that it is 'their meat 'and drink to do their Father's will.' and as the natural appetite is carried out towards food, though we ſhould not reflect on the neceſſity of it for the preſervation of our lives; ſo are they carried with a natural and unforced pro-

penſion towards that which is good and commendable.

Hitherto we have been ſpeaking of thoſe qualifications which are neceſſary for obtaining an entrance into heaven: it is high time we were caſting our eyes upon the world, to ſee how the tempers and actions of men agree with them. and if firſt we look back upon the old world, we ſhall ſee how ſoon wickedneſs did overſpread the face of the earth, and all fleſh had corrupted his way: and of all the multitudes that were then in the world, only Noah and his family were found worthy to eſcape the general deluge; nay even in it there was a curſed Cham, the father of a wicked generation. after that the church of God was confined unto a very narrow corner; and while darkneſs covered the face of the earth, only Paleſtine was enlightened with the knowledge of God: 'he ſhewed his word unto Jacob, his ſtatutes 'and his judgments unto Iſrael. but 'he dealt not ſo with every nation: 'as for his judgments, they have not

'known them*. they were given up to 'the luſts of their own hearts, and wor-'ſhipped the works of their own hands.' their devotions were performed unto devils, and their religious myſteries were full of the groſſeſt impurities. I ſhall not now enter on the debate, whether ever any Heathen might poſſibly have been ſaved? we are more concerned to ſecure our own ſalvation, than to diſpute about theirs: and yet I muſt ſay, that, amongſt all the lives of celebrated Heathens, I could never meet with the character of a truly good man. and though I love not to decry morality, yet that, pride and ſelf-conceit which mingled itſelf with their faireſt actions, makes me look upon them as indeed ſplendida peccata, a more ſpecious kind of ſins. but ſuppoſe ſomething could be ſaid for Socrates and Plato, and two or three others, what is that to thoſe huge multitudes, who, without all peradventure, ran headlong into everlaſting deſtruction? but let us leave theſe times, and look upon the preſent condition

* Pſal. cxlvii. 19, 20.

of the world. it is a ſad account of it that is given by Breerwood in his Enquiries, that dividing the whole world into thirty parts, nineteen are Pagan, ſix are Mahometan, and only five remain for Chriſtians of all perſuaſions. I ſhall not warrant the exactneſs of his reckoning: but certainly the number of Chriſtians carries but a very ſmall proportion to the reſt of mankind. and of theſe again, how few are there orthodox in their religion? I dare not condemn all thoſe who live in the Romiſh communion: but ſure they lie under very great diſadvantages; and, beſides the common difficulty of Chriſtianity, their errors and ſuperſtitions are no ſmall hinderances unto them.

But we may perhaps think ourſelves little concerned in them. let us conſider thoſe who live in communion with ourſelves, and ſee what is to be thought of the generality of them. and, firſt, we ſhall find a very great number of them ſo groſsly ignorant, that they 'know 'not the way that leads to life.' and truly it is not ſo broad that people

ſhould keep it by gueſs. and however they imagine, that their ignorance will not only be excuſable in itſelf, but afford a cloak to their other wickedneſs; yet dreadful is that threatening of the prophet Iſaiah, 'It is a people of no 'underſtanding: therefore he that made 'them will not have mercy on them, and 'he that formed them will ſhew them no 'favour.' but, beſides thoſe many thouſands that periſh for lack of knowledge, how great are the number of vitious and ſcandalous perſons? remove but our gluttons and drunkards, our thieves and deceivers, our oppreſſors and extortioners, our ſcolders and revilers, our fornicators and adulterers, and all that curſed crew that are guilty of ſuch heinous crimes, and how thin ſhould our churches be? to what a ſmall number ſhould we quickly be reduced? a little corner would hold us all. and think you theſe I have been ſpeaking of, are fit to enter into the kingdom of heaven? perhaps you may think us raſh to condemn ſo many of our neighbours; but the Apoſtle hath done it to our hands: 'know ye

'not that the unrighteous ſhall not in-
'herit the kingdom of God? be not de-
'ceived: neither fornicators, nor ido-
'laters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate,
'nor abuſers of themſelves with man-
'kind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor
'drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortio-
'ners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of
'God *.' you ſee what a heavy ſentence is pronounced: and O how many are included under it! I ſhall name one other vice, which I fear will drive in no ſmall number of thoſe who are yet behind; and that is, the helliſh and unaccountable cuſtomary ſin of ſwearing, whereby men do commonly throw away their ſouls, without any temptation, pleaſure or advantage. how often do men baffle the ſacred name of God, by calling him to witneſs to ſuch trifles as they might be aſhamed to atteſt before any grave or ſober perſon? this they account an ornament of ſpeech, and their words would never ſound big enough without it. I cannot ſtand to reckon up all the aggravations of this ſin. it is certainly

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

inconſiſtent with a religious temper: and this alone, if there were no more, would damn the greateſt part of the Chriſtian world. and what ſhall we ſay of all thoſe other vices, which are ſo frequently practiſed, yea and defended too among us? for, alas! we are arrived at that height of impiety, that virtue and vice ſeem to have ſhifted places, evil and good to have changed their names. it is counted a gallant thing, to deſpiſe all divine and human laws; and a childiſh ſcrupuloſity, to forbear any thing that may gratify our luſts. a ſtrong faith is accounted an argument of weak judgment; dependance upon Providence is judged want of foreſight; and that there is no wit but in deceiving others: no man is reckoned generous, unleſs he be extremely ambitious; and it is want of courage to forgive an injury. O religion, whither art thou fled! in what corner of the world ſhall we find thee? ſhall we ſearch thee in courts and palaces of great men? pride and luxury hath driven thee thence; and they are too much concerned in the bu-

ſineſs and pleaſures of this world, to mind thoſe of another. ſhall we ſeek thee in the cottages of the poor? envy and diſcontent lodgeth there; their outward want takes up all their thoughts, and they have little regard for their ſouls. ſhall we go into the city? cheating and extortion, and intemperance, are almoſt all we can meet with there. and if we retire into the country, we ſhall find as little innocence in it 'We 'may look for judgment, but behold 'oppreſſion; for righteouſneſs, but be-'hold a cry.'

After all that we have hitherto ſaid, ſome may think themſelves ſafe enough, being conſcious of none of thoſe vices which we have named. but, alas! what is all this? they may ſtill be far from the kingdom of heaven. religion ſtands not in negatives; and the being free from groſs and ſcandalous vices, is a poor plea for heaven. look how thy ſoul is furniſhed with thoſe divine graces, which ought to qualify thee for it. I ſhall name but one; and it is, the Love of God: and every body pretendeth to

it: but O how few are there in the world that underſtand what it means; that feel the power and efficacy of it on their own ſpirits! 'amor eſt pondus a-'nimi:' love is that weight whereby a ſoul is carried towards the object which it loves, and reſteth in it as its proper center. thoſe who are acquainted with this noble paſſion, even in its wanderings and deviations from its proper object, when it is wholly fixed on ſome ſilly creature like ourſelves; theſe, I ſay, do know what mighty effects it is wont to produce in the ſouls where it prevaileth; how it makes them almoſt forget their own intereſt, and only mind that of another; how careful they are of every thing that may pleaſe or advantage the perſon, and how afraid to offend them; what delight they have in their converſation, and how hardly they endure to be abſent from them. ſee therefore if thou findeſt any thing anſwerable to theſe effects of love, in the affection thou pretendeſt unto God. are his glory and honour the deareſt of all things unto thee; and wouldeſt thou ra-

ther hear thyſelf and all thy friends reviled, than his holy name blaſphemed? is it thy greateſt care and buſineſs to pleaſe him, and art thou watchful againſt every ſin? is there nothing in the world ſo dear unto thee, but thou wouldeſt part with for his ſake; and ſtill deſireſt he ſhould do his own will rather than thine? is nothing ſo delightful as to converſe with him? and doth every thing ſeem burdenſome which detains thee long from him? if we would examine ourſelves by theſe meaſures, I fear moſt of us would find our confidence built on a ſandy foundation.

Perhaps you will tell me, that though things be not ſo well at preſent; though you have not yet attained theſe endowments that are neceſſary to fit you for heaven, nor have indeed begun to endeavour after them: yet hereafter you hope all ſhall be well; you'll repent and amend once before you die. but conſider, I beſeech you, my brethren, what it is that you ſay. when think you that this promiſed reformation ſhall begin? ſome two or three years after this, when you

have pleaſed yourſelves, and indulged your luſts a little more? but what aſſurance have you to live ſo long? are not your neighbours dropping down every day about you, who expected death as little as you? and ſuppoſe you live, what greater probability is there of your reformation at that time than now? had you not the ſame thoughts and reſolutions ſeveral years ago, which yet have taken no effect at all? will you not have the ſame temptations and ſnares? will your luſts be more eaſily overcome, when ſtrengthened by longer cuſtom? will it be more eaſy to return after you have wandered further out of your way? belike it is on a deathbed-repentance you have grounded your hopes; you reſolve to part with your luſts when you can keep them no longer, and ſerve God Almighty with the dregs of your time. I ſhall not ſtand to tell you what ſhrewd objections are propoſed by ſome great and learned men againſt the validity and acceptableneſs of ſuch a repentance: ſome of them perhaps have been too peremptory and ſevere. true and unfeigned repentance,

which includeth the ſincere love of God, and reſignation to him, will never come too late; the foundation of heaven is laid in the ſouls of thoſe that have it. but if we conſider what a great matter true repentance is, the ſhortneſs of the time, and hinderances of a diſtempered body, and the ordinary relapſes of men who have promiſed fair on ſuch occaſions, and have outlived that ſickneſs they thought had been mortal; we cannot but acknowledge, that a deathbed-repentance is ſeldom ſincere; and that it is an unfit time to begin to fight with principalities and powers, when perhaps we have not ſtrength to turn ourſelves on our beds; in a word, that of thoſe who do thus delay and put off the buſineſs, very few ſhall be ſaved.

When we have ſaid all that we can ſay, there are many will never be perſuaded of the truth of that which we have been proving. they cannot think it conſiſtent with the goodneſs and mercy of God, that the greateſt part of mankind ſhould be damned: they cannot imagine that heaven ſhould be ſuch an empty

and desolate place, and have so very few to inhabit it. but O what folly and madness is this, for sinful men to set rules unto the Divine goodness, and draw conclusions from it so expressly contrary to what himself hath revealed! is it not enough that he has taught us the way to be happy, and given his own Son to the death to make it possible; that he hath waited so long, and invited us so earnestly, and so frequently told us our hazard? if all this cannot prevail; if we be obstinately resolved to continue wicked and miserable; if we despise his goodness, and turn all his grace unto wantonness; if we slight his threatenings, and will have none of his reproof; if we court damnation, and throw ourselves headlong into hell: how can we expect that he should interpose his omnipotency to pull us from thence, and place us in heaven against our will? those blessed regions are not like our new plantations, which are sometimes peopled with the worst sort of persons, lest they should be altogether desolate. there are thousands of angels,

and ten thouſand times ten thouſand that ſtand about the throne. we know little the extent of the univerſe, or what proportion the wicked or miſerable part of rational beings doth carry to thoſe that are happy and good: but this we know, that God was infinitely happy before he had made any creature; that he needeth not the ſociety of the holy angels, and will never admit that of wicked and irreligious men. but, that I may haſte towards a cloſe,

The doctrine we have been inſiſting on, is ſad and lamentable; but the conſideration of it may be very uſeful. it muſt needs touch any ſerious perſon with a great deal of grief and trouble, to behold a multitude of people conveened together, and to think, that, before thirty or forty years, a little more, or great deal leſs, they ſhall all go down unto the dark and ſilent grave, and the greater, the far greater part of their ſouls ſhall be damned unto endleſs and unſpeakable torments. but this may ſtir us up unto the greateſt diligence and care, that we may do what we can towards

the prevention of it. were the ſenſe of this deeply ingraven on all our minds, with what care and diligence, with what ſerioufneſs and zeal would miniſters deal with the people committed to their charge, that by any means they might ſave ſome? how would parents, and huſbands, and wives, employ all their diligence and induſtry, and make uſe of the moſt uſeful methods, for reclaiming their near relations, and pulling them from the brink of hell? laſtly, what holy violence would each of us uſe for ſaving ourſelves from this common ruin, and making our calling and election ſure? this, I ſay, is the uſe of what we have been ſpeaking: and may Almighty God ſo accompany it with his bleſſing and power, that it may be ſo happily effectual to ſo excellent a purpoſe. and unto this God, &c.

THE DUTY AND PLEASURE OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING.

PSAL. cvii. 15.

Oh that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

THERE is ſcarce any duty of religion more commonly neglected, or more ſlightly performed, than that of praiſe and thankſgiving. the ſenſe of our wants puts us upon begging favours from God; and the conſciouſneſs of our ſins conſtrains us to deprecate his wrath. thus intereſt and ſelf-love ſend us to our prayers. but, alas! how ſmall a part hath an ingenuous gratitude in our devotion? how ſeldom are we ſerious and hearty in our acknowledgments of the Divine bounty? the ſlender returns of this nature which we make, are many times a formal ceremony, a preface to uſher in our petitions for what we want, rather than any ſincere expreſſion of our thankful reſentment for what we have

received. far different was the temper of the holy Pſalmiſt, whoſe affectionate acknowledgments of the goodneſs and bounty of God, in the chearful celebration of his praiſe, make up a conſiderable part of his divine and raviſhing ſongs. how often do we find him exciting and diſpoſing himſelf to join voice, hand and heart together in this holy and delightful employment? 'Bleſs the 'Lord, O my ſoul: and all that is with-'in me, bleſs his holy name *. My heart 'is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed. I 'will ſing and give praiſe. awake up, 'my glory, awake, pſaltery and harp: I 'myſelf will awake right early' †. and being conſcious of his own inſufficiency for the work, he inviteth others unto it; calling in the whole creation to aſſiſt him: 'O ſing unto the Lord a new 'ſong: ſing unto the Lord, all the earth. 'give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of 'the people, give unto the Lord glory 'and ſtrength ‡. Praiſe ye the Lord. 'Praiſe ye the Lord from the heavens:

* Pſal. ciii. 1. † Pſal. lvii. 7, 8.
‡ Pſal. xcvi. 1. 7.

praiſe him in the heights. praiſe him, ‘ ye ſun and moon: praiſe him, all ye ‘ ſtars of light; mountains and all hills, ‘ fruitful trees and all cedars; beaſts ‘ and all cattle, creeping things, and fly- ‘ ing fowl *. Bleſs the Lord, all his ‘ works in all places of his dominion’ †. many ſuch figurative expreſſions occur, and allowance muſt be made for the poetical ſtrain; but in the text we have a proper and paſſionate wiſh, ‘ Oh that ‘ men would praiſe the Lord,’ &c.

‘ Oh that men,’ &c. man is the great prieſt of this lower world, by whom all the homage and ſervice of the other creatures is to be paid to their common Lord and Maker. ‘ God hath made ‘ him to have dominion over the works ‘ of his hand; he hath put all things ‘ under his feet; all ſheep and oxen, ‘ yea, and the beaſts of the field: the ‘ fowl of the air, and the fiſh of the ſea, ‘ and whatſoever paſſeth through the ‘ paths of the ſeas’ ‡. and the Divine bounty, in maintaining of theſe poor

* Pſal. cxlviii. 1. 3. 9. 10.

† Pſal. ciii. 22. ‡ Pſal. viii. 6, 7, 8.

creatures, redoundeth unto him; and therefore it is highly reaſonable that he ſhould pay the tribute of praiſe for them, who are not capable to know their dependence on God, or their obligations unto him. 'The young lions are ſaid 'to roar and ſeek their meat from 'God *. The young ravens do cry 'unto him' †. but theſe are only the complaints of languiſhing nature, heard and relieved by the God of nature; but not directly and particularly addreſſed to him. man alone is capable to entertain communion with God, to know his goodneſs, and to celebrate his praiſe.

'Oh that men would praiſe the Lord.' praiſe is the acknowledgment of the goodneſs and excellency of a perſon: and though the deſire of it, in us who have nothing of our own but folly and ſin, and whoſe beſt performances have a miſerable alloy of adherent corruption, be a blameable vanity and preſumption; yet certainly it is highly reaſonable for God, who is the author and fountain of all good, to require and expect it from

* Pſal. civ. 21. † Job xxxviii. 41.

his creatures. he hath made this great world as a temple for his honour, and it ſhould continually reſound with his praiſe. 'tis true, all the praiſes of men and angels can add nothing to his happineſs and glory; yet there is a fitneſs and congruity in the thing; and it is our happineſs as well as our duty to perform it: for 'it is good to ſing prai-'ſes to our God; for it is pleaſant, and 'praiſe is comely' †. this is the bleſſed employment of the holy ones above: and if ever we taſte the pleaſures of heaven upon earth, it is then when our ſouls are raviſhed with an overflowing ſenſe of the Divine goodneſs, and our mouths are filled with his praiſe,

'Oh that men would praiſe the Lord 'for his goodneſs.' all the attributes of God deſerve our higheſt praiſe. power, wiſdom and goodneſs are all one in him; but, as we have different conceptions of theſe, Goodneſs is that lovely attribute which doth peculiarly attract our affection, and excite our praiſe. our love to God doth not ſo much flow from the

† Pſal. cxlvii. 1.

conſideration of his greatneſs, whereby he can do whatever he will, as from the conſideration of his goodneſs, that he always willeth what is beſt; that his almighty power hath infinite wiſdom to regulate it, and unſpeakable bounty to actuate and exert it.'

'Oh that men would praiſe the Lord 'for his goodneſs, and for his wonder-'ful works to the children of men!' the Divine goodneſs doth ſpread and extend itſelf over all the parts of the univerſe, and embraceth the whole creation in its arms: it not only diſplayeth itſelf moſt illuſtriouſly to the bleſſed inhabitants of the region above, but reacheth alſo to the meaneſt worm that crawleth on the ground. the beaſts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and the fiſhes of the ſea, and the innumerable ſwarms of little inſects which we can hardly diſcern with our eyes, are all ſubjects of that Almighty care: by him they are brought forth into the world; by him they are furniſhed with proviſion ſuitable for them: 'theſe all wait upon thee,' (ſaith the Pſalmiſt): 'that thou mayeſt

'give them their meat in due ſeaſon. 'that thou giveſt them, they gather: 'thou openeſt thine hand, they are filled 'with good*.' but here, to excite us to thankfulneſs, he makes choice of an inſtance wherein we ourſelves are more nearly concerned; and exhorteth 'to 'praiſe the Lord for his wonderful 'works to the children of men.' if the goodneſs of God to the holy angels be above our reach, and his bounty to the inferior creatures be below our notice; yet ſure we muſt be infinitely dull if we do not obſerve his dealings with ourſelves and thoſe of our kind. as our intereſt maketh us more ſenſible of this, ſo gratitude doth oblige us to a more particular acknowledgment of it.

Thus you have the meaning and importance of the text. I know not how we can better employ the reſt of the time, than by ſuggeſting to your meditations particular inſtances 'of this 'goodneſs, and of his wonderful works 'to the children of men.'

Let us then reflect on the works both

* Pſal. civ. 27, 28.

of creation and providence. Let us conſider in what a goodly and well-furniſhed world he hath placed us, how 'he 'hath ſtretched out the heavens as a 'curtain over our heads, and therein 'hath ſet a tabernacle for the ſun; which, 'as an univerſal lamp,' enlighteneth all the inhabitants of the earth. 'his go-'ing forth is from the end of the heaven, 'his circuit to the ends thereof; and 'there is nothing hid from his heat.' in the morning he ariſeth, and makes the darkneſs flee before him, and diſcovereth all the beauty and luſtre of things. and truly 'the light is ſweet, and a 'pleaſant thing it is for the eyes to be-'hold the ſun.' nor is it leſs uſeful and advantageous for directing our ways, and ordering our ſeveral employments: 'man goeth forth to his work, and to 'his labour until the evening. he maketh 'darkneſs,and it is night*.' the curtains are drawn, and all things huſhed into ſilence, that man may enjoy the more quiet repoſe: and yet, to leſſen the horror of darkneſs, and lighten ſuch as are

* Pſal. civ. 23. 20.

obliged to travel in the night, while the ſun is enlightening another part of the world, we have the moon and ſtars to ſupply his room. 'O give thanks unto 'the Lord, for he is good; for his mer-'cy endureth for ever. to him that by 'wiſdom made the heavens; for his, &c. 'the moon and ſtars to rule by night; 'for his, &c.'

Again, how wonderfully hath he furniſhed this lower world for our maintenance and accommodation! 'the hea-'ven, even the heaven of heavens are the 'Lord's: but the earth hath he given 'to the children of men †. he hath made 'us to to have dominion over all the 'works of his hands; he hath put all 'things under our feet: all ſheep and 'oxen, yea, and the beaſts of the field: 'the fowl of the air, the fiſh of the ſea, 'and whatſoever paſſeth through the 'paths of the ſeas*.' by the art and induſtry of man the ſwifteſt fowls are caught, the fierceſt creatures are tamed, the ſtrongeſt beaſts are overcome, and all made ſerviceable unto him. the horſe

† Pſal. cxv. 16. * Pſal. viii. 6. 7. 8.

helpeth our journey both with ſpeed and eaſe, the oxen labour the ground for us, ſheep afford us meat and cloaths: from the bowels of the earth we dig fuels, metals, and ſtones; which are ſtill the more plentiful, as they are uſeful and advantageous to us. thoſe ſtones which ſerve for building, are almoſt every where ready at hand; whereas rubies and diamonds, and other ſuch gliſtering trifles, are found but in a few places of the world, and gotten with a great deal of toil. and to what hardſhip ſhould all ſort of artificers be put, if iron were as ſcanty as gold? the ſurface of the earth yieldeth graſs for the cattle, and herb for the ſervice of man; 'and wine that maketh glad the heart of 'man, and bread which ſtrengtheneth 'his heart.' theſe it affordeth unto us from time to time; and, while we are ſpending the productions of one year, God is providing for us againſt another. there is no ſmall variety of ſeaſons and influences, which concur for the production of that corn, which we murmur ſo much for when we want, and value ſo little when it doth abound. the win-

ter-cold muſt temper and prepare the earth: the gentle ſpring muſt cheriſh and foment the ſeed; vapours muſt be raiſed, and condenſed into clouds, and then ſqueezed out and ſifted into little drops, to water and refreſh the ground; and then the ſummer heat muſt ripen and digeſt the corn before it be fit to be cut down. 'thou viſiteſt the earth,' (ſaith the Pſalmiſt), 'and watereſt it: thou 'greatly enricheſt it with the river of 'God which is full of water: thou pre-'pareſt them corn, when thou haſt ſo 'provided for it. thou watereſt the ridges 'thereof abundantly: thou ſettleſt the 'furrows thereof: thou makeſt it ſoft 'with ſhowers, thou bleſſeſt the ſpring-'ing thereof. thou crowneſt the year 'with thy goodneſs, and all thy paths 'drop fatneſs. they drop upon the paſ-'tures of the wilderneſs: and the little 'hills rejoice on every ſide. the paſtures 'are clothed with flocks; the valleys 'alſo are covered over with corn; 'they ſhout for joy, they alſo ſing*.

'O Lord, how wonderful are thy

* Pſal. lxv. 9. 10. 11, 12. 13.

'works! in wiſdom haſt thou made
'them all: the earth is full of thy riches.
'ſo is the great and wide ſea, wherein
'are things creeping innumerable, both
'ſmall and great fiſhes. there go the
'ſhips,' thoſe great engines of traffick and commerce, whereby every country is eaſily furniſhed with the productions of another. and indeed it is a wonderful and aſtoniſhing contrivance of nature, that men ſhould be eaſily tranſported to the remoteſt places in ſuch floating houſes, and carried (ſo to ſpeak) upon the wings of the wind; that they ſhould be able to find out their way in the wideſt ocean and darkeſt night, by the direction of a trembling needle, and the unaccountable influence of a ſorry ſtone.
'they that go down to the ſea in ſhips,
'that do buſineſs in great waters: theſe
'ſee the works of the Lord, and his
'wonders in the deep. for he commandeth, and raiſeth the ſtormy wind, which
'lifteth up the waves thereof. they
'mount up to the heaven, they go down
'again to the depths, their ſoul is melted becauſe of trouble. they reel to and

'fro, and ſtagger like a drunken man,
'and are at their wits end. then they cry
'unto the Lord in their trouble, and he
'bringeth them out of their diſtreſſes. he
'maketh the ſtorm a calm, ſo that the
'waves thereof are ſtill. then are they
'glad, becauſe they are quiet; ſo he
'bringeth them unto their deſired ha-
'ven. oh that men *,' &c.

But now we are fallen unawares from the works of creation to thoſe of providence. indeed it is hard to keep to any exact method in a ſubject ſo copious, where one thing doth obtrude itſelf upon us before we have done with another. Let us call back our thoughts to a more orderly conſideration of that bountiful providence which followeth us from time to time. we are infinitely indebted to the Divine goodneſs before we ſee the light of the world. 'he poureth us out
'as milk, and cruddleth us like cheeſe.
'he clothes us with skin and fleſh, and
'fenceth us with bones and ſinews. he
'granteth us life and favour, and his
'viſitation preſerveth our ſpirit' †. this

* Pſal. cvii. 23. &c. † Job x. 10. 11. 12.

is ſo entirely the work of God, that the parents do not ſo much as underſtand how it is performed; 'for who knoweth 'the way of the ſpirit,' (how it cometh to enliven a piece of matter), 'or how 'the bones do grow in the womb of her 'that is with child? I will praiſe thee,' (ſaith the Pſalmiſt), 'for I am fearfully 'and wonderfully made: marvellous are 'thy works, and that my ſoul knoweth 'right well. my ſubſtance was not hid 'from thee, when I was made in ſecret, 'and curiouſly wrought in the loweſt 'parts of the earth. thine eyes did ſee 'my ſubſtance yet being unperfect, and 'in thy book all my members were writ-'ten, which in continuance were faſhi-'oned, when as yet there was none of 'them. how precious alſo are thy 'thoughts unto me, O God! how great 'is the ſum of them* ! &c.' nine months ordinarily paſs in the forming of this curious and wonderful piece, before it be expoſed to the view of the world; and then the priſoner is releaſed from that narrow confinement, and the mo-

* Pſal. cxxxix. 14. 15. 16. 17.

ther and the child are delivered together. the mother 'forgetteth her anguiſh and pangs, for joy that a man-child is born into the world.' the poor infant is naked and weak, ready to expire for hunger and cold, unable to do any thing for itſelf but weep and cry: but he that brought it into the world, hath already provided for its ſuſtentation in it. the mother's breaſts are filled with a wholſome and delicious liquor, which faileth not from time to time, but is inviſibly ſupplied, like the widow of Sarepta's oil, till the child become capable of ſtronger food.

But it was not enough that mothers ſhould be enabled to ſuſtain their infants, unleſs they had been alſo powerfully inclined unto it: and therefore God hath implanted thoſe bowels of kindneſs and compaſſion, which prompts them to the moſt tender and affectionate care, and makes them as ready to help their childrens neceſſities as their own: which, though it do hardly deſerve the name of a virtue, being common to them with the brutes, 'for even the ſea-

'monſters draw out the breaſts, and 'give ſuck to their young' † ; yet certainly it is an effect of the Divine wiſdom, that infants may not want thoſe ſuccours which would never have been ſo effectually ſecured to them by a law. mean while, the poor infant is ſo weak, and ſo unable to endure the leaſt violence, and withal expoſed to ſo innumerable dangers, that the mother's ſolicitude and care would be to little purpoſe, if it were not preſerved by a higher and inviſible Power, which watcheth for its ſafety when the mother and nurſe are faſt aſleep, and keeps it from being overlaid.

As we grow in years, our neceſſities multiply, and dangers increaſe rather than diminiſh; and we are ſtill more and more obliged to God for the ſupply of the one, and our preſervation from the other. we think perhaps we have now ſet up for ourſelves, and can provide what is neceſſary by our own induſtry, and keep ourſelves out of harm's way. but there cannot be a more fooliſh and

† Lam. iv. 3.

unreaſonable thought. there needeth but a little conſideration to undeceive us. all that we project and do for ourſelves, dependeth on the integrity of our faculties, and the ſoundneſs of our reaſon; which is a happineſs we can never ſecure unto ourſelves. I chuſe this inſtance the rather, becauſe it is a mercy invaluable in itſelf, and I fear very ſeldom conſidered by us. O what an unſpeakable bleſſing it is, that we are preſerved in our right wits; that we are not roaring in ſome bedlam, or running furiouſly up and down the ſtreets; nor have our ſpirits ſunk into that ſillineſs or ſtupidity which would make every little child to mock and deride us! it is poſſible enough that this ſhould befal the wiſeſt and moſt ſtedfaſt of us all. a ſtroke on the head, a few more degrees of heat in the blood, or agitation of the vital ſpirits, were enough to do the buſineſs. ſo weak and mutable creatures are we; ſo ſmall is the diſtance betwixt a wiſe man and a fool. next to the uſe of our reaſon, how much are we indebted to the Divine goodneſs for our health and wel-

fare! theſe bodies of ours are made up of ſo various parts, and withal ſo nice and delicate, that the leaſt thing in the world is enough to intangle and diſorder them. a drop of humour, or a grain of ſand, will ſometimes occaſion ſuch anguiſh and pain, as render a man inſenſible of all the comforts he enjoyeth in the world: and they who underſtand any thing of the human body, will juſtly wonder that all the parts are kept in order for an hour. what a mercy ought we therefore to account it, to find ourſelves in health and vigour, no aching in our head, no noiſomeneſs in our ſtomach, no fever in the blood, none of the humours vitiated, none of thoſe innumerable conduits broken which convey them, but all the organs performing their proper functions, and a ſprightly vigour poſſeſſing every part! how much are we indebted to that Providence which preſerveth us from falls and bruiſes, 'and keepeth all our bones, ſo that 'none of them is broken;' which watcheth over us when we are aſleep, and careth for us when we are not able

to care for ourſelves! what a bleſſing is it to enjoy the repoſe of the night; that we are not wearied with endleſs toſſings and rollings, 'nor ſcared with dreams, 'and terrified with viſions,' whereof holy Job complains; that we are protected from fire and violence, from evil ſpirits, and from evil men! 'I will both 'lay me down in peace, and ſleep; for 'thou, Lord, only makeſt me to dwell 'in ſafety.' and what ſhall we ſay of our food and raiment, of our houſes and manifold accommodations, of the kindneſs of our neighbours, and the love of our friends, of all the means of our ſubſiſtence, and all the comforts of our lives? we are made up, as it were, of a great many ſeveral pieces, have ſuch a variety of intereſts and enjoyments concurring to our preſent happineſs, that it is an unſpeakable Goodneſs which continueth them all with us from time to time; that when we awake in the morning we ſhould find our minds clear, our bodies well, our houſe ſafe, all our friends in health, and all our intereſts ſecure. 'He is a wall of fire

'about us, and about all that we have, 'by night, and by day; and his mer-'cies are new every morning.' I cannot ſtand to ſpeak of all thoſe more publick mercies, the peace and tranquillity of kingdoms, and all the happy effects of ſociety and government. I ſhall only ſay, that it is a ſignal inſtance of the Divine wiſdom and goodneſs in the government of the world, that ſuch a vaſt number of perſons, only acted by ſelf-love, ſhould all conſpire for the publick intereſt, and ſo eminently advance one another's welfare; that magiſtrates ſhould ſo willingly undergo the trouble of government, and a heady and inconſiderate multitude ſhould be commanded and overawed by a ſingle man. certainly it can be no other but that ſame God 'who ſtilleth the noiſe of the waves,' that can prevent or compoſe the tumults of the people.

Hitherto we have conſidered thoſe inſtances of the Divine bounty which relate to our temporal concerns. but ſure we were made for ſome higher and more excellent end, than to paſs a few

months or years in this world, to eat, drink, ſleep, and die. God hath deſigned us for a more laſting and durable life, and hath accordingly made greater proviſions for it. he taketh care of our very bodies; but hath an infinitely greater regard to thoſe ſpiritual and immortal ſubſtances which he hath breathed into us. and here in all reaſon we ought to begin with that great and fundamental mercy, which is the root and ſpring of all his other mercies towards the ſouls of men; I mean, the incarnation and the death of his only begotten Son. but, alas! where are thoſe affections wherewith that ſhould be ſpoken and heard? our dulneſs makes me almoſt afraid to meddle with ſo high a theme. that the eternal Son of God, the Wiſdom of the Father, the Maker and Lord of all things, ſhould clothe himſelf with the infirmities of the human nature, and come down from the habitation of his glory, and take up his abode among the wretched and rebellious children of men, to reclaim them from their wickedneſs and folly, and re-

duce them to their duty and their happineſs; that he ſhould have gone up and down in the world upwards of thirty years in poverty, affliction, and contempt, doing good and ſuffering evil, ſcattering bleſſings and enduring injuries where-ever he came; and at laſt ſhould have yielded up his life in unſpeakable anguiſh and torment, to be a propitiation for our ſins: theſe are matters which ought never to be ſpoken or heard, without loſing ourſelves (as it were) in a rapture of admiration, gratitude, and love. 'O the breadth, 'length, depth, and height of that love 'which paſſeth all knowledge;' which made God aſſume our nature, that we might become partakers of his! it is true, all that our bleſſed Saviour hath done and ſuffered, proveth ineffectual to the greateſt part of mankind. but ſure they have themſelves to blame. God hath both 'ſaid and ſworn, that he hath 'no pleaſure in the death of ſinners, but 'would have them rather repent and 'live.' and indeed his way of dealing with them, doth ſufficiently declare the

ſame. with what long-ſuffering patience doth he wait for their repentance! what pains doth he take to reclaim them!

It is an aſtoniſhing thing, to conſider what indignities and affronts are every day done unto that infinite Majeſty by ſinful duſt and aſhes, and that he doth not avenge himſelf by their total overthrow; that they ſhould violate his laws, and deſpiſe his threatnings, and defy him, as it were, unto his very face, and yet he ſhould pity and ſpare them, and wait to be gracious unto them. were the government of the world committed to the meekeſt perſon on the face of the earth, he would never endure the outrages which are committed againſt Heaven, but would preſently loſe all his patience, and turn the whole frame into ruin. but God is love: 'his 'thoughts and ways are not like thoſe 'of men; but as the heavens are higher 'than the earth, ſo are his thoughts and 'ways higher than ours.' and when the obſtinate wickedneſs of ſinful creatures doth, as it were, force and extort pu-

niſhments from his hands, what reluctancy, what unwillingneſs doth he expreſs to this work; this ſtrange and unnatural work, as himſelf ſeems to term it? 'how ſhall I give thee up, O 'Ephraim? how ſhall I give thee up? O 'that my people had hearkened unto me, 'that Iſrael had known my ways! O 'Jeruſalem! O Jeruſalem!' &c.

Again, as God waiteth patiently for our reformation, ſo he doth make uſe of many methods and means to bring us unto it. he hath publiſhed the goſpel through the world, and brought down the knowledge of it to our days, in ſpite of all the oppoſition of devils and men. he hath eſtabliſhed a church, and appointed a whole order of men, whoſe peculiar calling and buſineſs in the world is, to take care of peoples ſouls, to inſtruct them in the way to heaven, 'and as ambaſſadors in Chriſt's ſtead, 'to beſeech them to be reconciled unto 'God.' theſe are ſome of his common mercies: but who can expreſs that favour and love which he ſheweth to his own, to thoſe bleſſed perſons

whom he chuſeth, and cauſeth to approach unto himſelf, when he reſcueth them from the vanity of their converſation, 'and that pollution which is in the 'world through luſt;' when he moulds eth their ſouls unto a conformity with himſelf, and ſtampeth his bleſſed image upon them; when he viſiteth them with his holy Spirit, and filleth their heart with thoſe hidden pleaſures which none can underſtand but thoſe that feel them! 'a ſtranger intermeddleth not with their 'joy.' and yet even theſe are but the earneſt of that great felicity for which he hath deſigned us; 'thoſe joys that 'ar at his right hand, thoſe pleaſures 'that endure for evermore. eye hath 'not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor can it 'enter into the heart of man to conceive 'what God hath prepared for thoſe that 'love him. and it doth not yet appear 'what we ſhall be.' mean while, thoſe ſmall and imperfect diſcoveries which are made to us in the holy ſcriptures of that inconceivable happineſs, are enough to overwhelm us with admiration and wonder. to think that the bleſſed day is

coming, when we ſhall be looſed from theſe dull and lumpiſh bodies; thoſe ſinks of corruption, diſeaſes and pains; thoſe priſons and dungeons of our heaven-born ſouls; and, being clothed with robes of light and glory, ſhall get above the clouds, and all thoſe ſtorms and tempeſts which are here below; and be carried into thoſe bleſſed regions of calmneſs and ſerenity, of peace and joy, of happineſs and ſecurity; when we ſhall come unto the 'innumerable com-'pany of angels, and the general aſſem-'bly of the church of the firſt-born, and 'the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect; 'and to Jeſus the mediator of the new 'covenant;' there to behold the glory of God, and all the ſplendor of the court of heaven; to view and contemplate that infinite power which created the world, that unſearchable wiſdom which ordereth all things, that unſpeakable goodneſs which exerteth both; nay, 'ſo to ſee 'God as to become like unto him*; and 'beholding with open face the glory of 'the Lord, to be changed into the ſame 'image, from glory to glory †:' to re-

* 1 John iii. 2. † 2 Cor. iii. 18.

ceive the continual illapſes of the Divine goodneſs, and the conſtant expreſſions of his favour and love; and to have our own ſouls melted and diſſolved into the flames of reciprocal affection, and that fire fed and nouriſhed by uninterrupted enjoyments: in a word, to be continually tranſported into ecſtaſies and raptures, and ſwallowed up in the embraces of eternal ſweetneſs, and to be loſt, as it were, in the ſource and fountain of happineſs and bliſs! 'Lord, 'what is man, that thou takeſt know-'ledge of him? or the Son of man, that 'thou makeſt ſuch account of him ‡? 'what is man, that thou ſhouldſt thus 'magnify him? and that thou ſhouldſt 'ſet thine heart ſo much upon him *? 'Oh that men would therefore praiſe 'the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his 'wonderful works to the children of 'men! O give thanks unto the Lord, 'for he is good: for his mercy endu-'reth for ever. Bleſſed be the name of 'the Lord from this time forth and for 'evermore. Amen.'

‡ Pſal. cxliv. 3. * Job vii. 17.

On the Nativity of our Saviour.

Psal. ii. 11. the latter part.

Rejoice with trembling.

THE obſervation of feſtivals being one of thoſe balls of contention which have been toſſed ſo hotly in the religious debates of this unhappy age, it may perhaps be expected, that we ſhould begin with a vindication of this day's ſolemnity from the exceptions that are wont to be taken againſt it; and that the one half of our ſermon ſhould be ſpent in apology for the other. but I hope we may well enough ſpare the pains, and employ the time to better purpoſe. for you who are aſſembled in this houſe are perſuaded, I truſt, of the lawfulneſs of your own practice; and we cannot direct our ſpeech to thoſe that are abſent from it. and really it were to be wiſhed, that there were leſs noiſe and debate about matters of this nature; and that, being agreed in the

more ſubſtantial parts of religion, we did all charitably acquieſce in that excellent advice of the Apoſtle, which he giveth in a parallel inſtance, ‘ let not him that ‘ eateth, deſpiſe him that eateth not; ‘ and let not him that eateth not, judge ‘ him that eateth.’ and then, as we ſhall not abate any thing of that love and reverence which we owe to the piety and truth of thoſe who differ from us in ſo ſmall matters; ſo we might hope they would not be haſty to condemn us, if, in compliance with the practiſe of the ancient church, and the preſent conſtitution of our own, we take the occaſion of this ſeaſon, with thankfulneſs, to remember the greateſt benefit that ever was conferred on the children of men, and at this time perform that ſervice which can never be unſeaſonable. however, I am confident it is both more hard and neceſſary to rectify and amend the abuſes of this ſolemnity, than to juſtify the right obſervation of it; to vindicate it from the diſhonour of ſome of its pretended friends, than to defend it from all the aſſaults of aggreſſors: and ac-

cordingly we ſhall make it our work to perſuade you to ſuch a deportment on this feſtival, as may beſt ſuit with the holy life and religion of that perſon whoſe nativity we commemorate.

The text which we have choſen may ſeem ſomewhat general, but yet it is eaſily applicable to the preſent occaſion; eſpecially if we remember, that it is an inference drawn from a prophecy, which, though it had its literal completion in the eſtabliſhment of David's throne, yet it was, in a myſtical and a more ſublime ſenſe, fulfilled in the incarnation and kingdom of the Meſſiah; as the Apoſtle in ſeveral places informeth us: 'for to which of the angels hath 'he ſaid at any time, Thou art my 'Son, this day have I begotten thee *?' whence he infers, that the angels themſelves are inferior to Chriſt, of whom this was ſpoken. the only difficulty of the words lieth in the ſtrange conjunction of theſe paſſions, *joy*, and *extreme fear*, which trembling ſeems to import; but this will be more fully cleared

* Heb. 1. 5.

in the ſequel of our diſcourſe. mean while ye may obſerve, that both theſe words, *fear* and *trembling*, are uſed in the text, and, in the ſcripture phraſe, uſually import humility, and diligence, ſolicitude and caution, and the fear of diſpleaſing, as being the moſt proper qualifications of our obedience, either to God or man. thus are we commanded to 'work out our ſalvation with 'fear and trembling *;' and ſervants are commanded to 'obey their maſters with 'fear and trembling:' † ſo the Corinthians are ſaid to have 'received Titus, 'being ſent to them, with fear and trem-'bling ‡;' and Chryſoſtom ſaith of the angels, that they aſſiſt with *fear* and *trembling*. all which places do import ſuch care and diligence, as are very neceſſary and reconcileable to chearful ſervice. reverence, and fear to offend, will be happily joined with holy joy in the performance of our duty; there being nothing more pleaſant, than to ſerve him diligently whom we reverence, and fear to diſpleaſe. thus much for ex-

* Phil. ii. 12. † Eph. vi. 5. ‡ 2 Cor. vii. 15.

plication. the text is too ſhort to be divided into many parts, but doth naturally fall aſunder into two; the former exciting and encouraging our joy, the latter qualifying and moderating the ſame. firſt, we are allowed, yea and commanded to rejoice; and then we are cautioned to do it with trembling. and accordingly our diſcourſe ſhall run in theſe two heads; firſt to exhort you to chearfulneſs and joy, then to ſet the right bounds and limits to the ſame: and, having done this in general, we ſhall endeavour to draw both theſe home to the preſent occaſion.

To begin with the firſt: joy and chearfulneſs are ſo far from being inconſiſtent with religion, when rightly ordered, that we find them many times allowed and recommended in ſcripture. thus in the laſt verſe of the 32d Pſalm, 'Be glad in the 'Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and 'ſhout for joy, all ye that are upright 'in heart.' and in verſ. 1. of the next Pſalm, 'Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righ-'teous, for praiſe is comely for the up-'right.' ſo Pſal. lxviii. 3. 'Let the righ-

'teous be glad: let them rejoice before 'the Lord, yea, let them exceedingly 'rejoice.' Pſal.cxlix. 5. 'Let the ſaints 'be joyful in glory: let them ſing a-'loud upon their beds.' and, that you may not think this a liberty proper only for the former diſpenſations, but that Chriſtians are obliged to greater ſeverity, the Apoſtle doth no leſs than three times give this admonition to the Philippians, 'Rejoice in the Lord; re-'joice always in the Lord; yea, I ſay, 'rejoice.' in relation to this perhaps it was, that the old hermit Palladius, having five hundred ſcholars, uſed never to diſmiſs them without this admonition, 'My friends, be chearful; forget 'not, I beſeech you, to be chearful.' this was the conſtant lecture he repeated, as often as St. John was wont to do theſe words, 'my little children, 'love one another.'

None of our natural inclinations were made in vain; and joy is neither an uſeleſs nor a ſmall paſſion; but, if rightly ordered, may become an eminent exerciſe of religion, as proper a

concomitant of thankfulneſs, as ſorrow of repentance. our devotion never ſoareth higher, than when it is carried on the wings of joy and love, when our ſouls are filled with the ſenſe of his goodneſs, and we heartily applaud the Hallelujahs of the bleſſed ſpirits, and all the praiſes of the creatures. and as joy is an excellent inſtrument of devotion, ſo a conſtant ſerenity and chearfulneſs of ſpirit is a fit diſpoſition for our other duties. I ſhould be loth to countenance any levity or diſſolution of ſpirit; and I hope, before we have done, we ſhall leave no ground to ſuſpect ſuch a deſign: and yet I would not have you imagine, that innocence and ſeverity are inſeparable companions, or that a free and chearful countenance is a certain ſign of an ill mind, or that men ought always to be ſad under the notion of being ſerious. I would not have you in love with a ſtudied face, nor think it a crime to laugh, or ſcrupulouſly to refuſe ſuch innocent and ingenuous divertiſements as you find uſeful to refreſh your ſpirits, and preſerve their alacrity: for chearfulneſs

enlightens the mind, and encourages the heart, and raiſeth the ſoul, as it were, to breathe in a purer air. it misbecomes none but the wicked, in whom it is commonly a light mirth and fooliſh jollity. as a curious dreſs may ſet off a handſome face, which yet will render thoſe who are ugly, more ill-favoured; ſo doth chearfulneſs exceedingly become good ſouls: in bad men it is moſt ridiculous. on the other hand, a ſad and ſullen humour, a dumpiſh, moroſe, and melancholy diſpoſition, is ſo far from being commendable, that at beſt it muſt be looked upon as an infirmity and weakneſs in the beſt of thoſe in whom it reſideth; and, if purpoſely affected or cheriſhed, may deſerve a ſeverer cenſure; being diſhonourable to God, injurious to our neighbours, prejudicial to ourſelves, and a thing highly unreaſonable. firſt, it is diſhonourable to God, on whom we profeſs to depend, and who, through our moroſeneſs, may be miſtaken for a hard and ſevere maſter. if you ſhould obſerve any man's ſervants to be always ſad and dejected, and could not

gueſs at the reaſon of it, you would be ready to conclude, that they were ill treated at home, and ſerved an unkind, tyrannical perſon. and therefore, if we have any regard to the honour of our Maſter, we ought carefully to avoid any thing, from which thoſe that are ſtrangers to him, are apt to take occaſion to entertain harſh and diſadvantageous thoughts of him and his ſervice. again, it is injurious to our neighbours; whom it doth deprive of the comforts of ſociety, and the innocent delights of more chearful converſe; it being better to be confined to ſolitude, than obliged to live with thoſe who are always ſullen. they are not like to be good company to others, who are ſo bad company to themſelves; nor will they eaſily endure to ſee others chearful and pleaſant, when they cannot allow themſelves ſo much as to ſmile. peeviſhneſs and anger are the ordinary companions of melancholy; and it is hard for ſervants and friends to pleaſe them in any thing who are accuſtomed to ſadneſs and diſcontent. but this is not all: there is a greater miſchief

in the matter; for they who are ſtrangers to religion, and obſerve them who pretend to it to be always ſad and melancholy, are thereby deterred from the ſtudy of piety, as that which would imbitter their lives, and deprive them of all their comforts; and they are apt to imagine, that if once they ſhould undertake a courſe of godlineſs, they ſhould never after enjoy a pleaſant hour, but, by a melancholy humour, and auſtere behaviour, become a burden to themſelves, and a burden to all about them. then they will think devotion a comfortleſs employment, when they ſee men come from retirements with ſad and heavy looks, moroſe and untowardly deportment: whereas really the ſpirit of religion is in itſelf moſt amiable and moſt lovely, moſt chearful, free, and ingenuous; and it is only mens weakneſs, and not their piety, that ought to be blamed for any ſuch diſorder in their minds.

Again, melancholy and ſadneſs is prejudicial to ourſelves, being an enemy to nature, and hurtful to bodily conſtitutions, eſpecially when it grows preva-

lent and extreme; and therefore men are obliged to be chearful for the ſame reaſons they take phyſick, and to guard againſt melancholy as we would do againſt a diſeaſe. beſides, it is very troubleſome to our ſpirits, and will make us ſmart even when we know not why. although melancholy muſings may be a very delightful entertainment to the mind; yet, in a little time, they grow to be very troubleſome. contrary to the nature of other births, they pleaſe us much while we bring them forth, but prove a miſerable torment when they are born. but, which is much worſe, it doth exceedingly indiſpoſe for the duties of religion. the eyes are not more darkened with fumes and vapours, than the underſtanding is when thoſe ſullen exhalations gather about us. clogs are not a greater impediment to the feet, than this humour to the motions of the ſoul. it inclines not only to think worſe of ourſelves and our condition than we need, but to do worſe than otherwiſe we ſhould. it repreſents thoſe things as exceedingly difficult which may be done

with eaſe, and thoſe impoſſible which have any conſiderable difficulty. it quite diſpirits us, and will not ſuffer us to attempt any thing, becauſe we imagine we can do nothing. although, perhaps, in a heat it may puſh us forward, yet it ſuddenly ſtays us, and makes us think we cannot go. if it catcheth fire, it makes us wild; and, when it hath ſpent that flame, it leaves us dead and dumpiſh.

Laſtly, ſadneſs and dejection of ſpirit in Chriſtians, is a thing very unreaſonable: for why ſhould they be ſad and heavy who ſerve ſo good a maſter, and who are aſſured of an infinite reward for their faithful ſervice? if the favour of a prince, or hopes of ſome earthly advantage, can ſupport and chear the minds of men; why ſhould not religious people, who have the friendſhip of God, and ſo many divine bleſſings in preſent poſſeſſion, and the certain expectation of more and greater, cheriſh a perpetual joy, and ever be of good comfort? what ſhould afflict them, or caſt them down? is it worldly croſſes or fears? they have not their portions

in things of this world: they are ſtrangers and pilgrims on earth, and cannot in reaſon be much ſollicitous about their accommodation in an inn, which they are ſo ſhortly to leave. beſides, where is he that doth not enjoy more and greater comforts than thoſe he is deprived and ſtands in need of? why then ſhouldſt thou not be more glad of what thou haſt, than ſorry for what thou wanteſt? perhaps thou haſt loſt part of thy fortune, but yet enjoyeſt more than many who live happily enough notwithſtanding. thou wanteſt money, but thou haſt thy health. if that be impaired, thou enjoyeſt the uſe of thy reaſon, which is infinitely more valuable. thou haſt loſt a friend, but perhaps thou haſt many behind; and ſhall that loſs do more to make thee ſad, than all the reſt to make thee chearful? or wilt thou, like a peeviſh child, throw all away, becauſe ſomething is taken from thee? I ſay not that moderate ſadneſs is blameable on ſuch occaſions, but that our grief ought not to be indulged till it grow habitual. and ſure,

whatever our croſſes and our fears be, we ought chearfully to acquieſce in a conſtant dependence on the Divine providence; having that infinite wiſdom, and goodneſs, and power, which made and doth govern the world, to care for us, and the promiſe of God for all thoſe things which he ſees neceſſary or convenient for us. what is it then that ſhould deject us, and deprive us of that joy which the text alloweth and commendeth? is it the ſenſe of our weakneſs, and the fear of miſſing that eternal happineſs for which we were created? if thou be altogether graceleſs, ſuch thoughts would ſeldom trouble thee; but if thou be really concerned in religion, and have a mind to heaven in earneſt; if thou haſt begun thy race, and art preſſing forward to obtain thy prize, thou haſt no reaſon to be diſcouraged or caſt down. God loves thee better than thou doſt either him or thyſelf; and holineſs is the genuine iſſue of the Divine nature: and therefore he cannot hide his face from it, he cannot deſert it as an outcaſt thing in the world; nay he is ready to cheriſh

and assist it, and perfect that gracious work which himself hath begun. away then with groundless fears and despondent thoughts, which dishonour God, and weaken your own hands. encourage yourselves with the assurance of the Divine assistance, and chearfully perform that which is incumbent upon yourselves. check the sadness of your spirits, and chide yourself into better temper; as David did, in Psal. xlii. and xliii. he took up his drooping mind, with this encouragement, 'why art thou cast 'down, O my soul?' &c.

But perhaps you will tell me, that chearful temper which we recommend, is very improper for these bad times wherein we live: and, though we had no trouble on account of our own interests, the miseries of others might oblige us to sadness, and blunt and damp all our joys. I answer, compassion indeed is a Christian virtue, and a good man will be concerned in the miseries under which he sees his neighbour groan, and be ready to assist him with his counsel, his labour, or his purse, if that will

relieve him. but he is not obliged to ſuffer the calamities of others to ſink ſo deeply into his ſpirit, as to diſturb the peace and harmony of his ſoul; elſe, ſince the world is a great hoſpital of miſery, and we ſee well nigh as many miſerable perſons as men, we muſt needs draw as much miſery on ourſelves, as all theirs doth amount to, and ſo deſerve more compaſſion than any of them. again, if we partake of the miſeries of others, ſo may we in their happineſs; if we ought to mourn with thoſe that mourn, ſo we ought to rejoice with them that rejoice. and though miſery is far more frequent in the world than happineſs, this can be no meaſure for the whole creation; and for any thing we know, for one ſinful wretch, there may be ten thouſand holy and happy ſpirits. however, all the miſery in the world carries no proportion to the infinite happineſs of Almighty God, which ought to be the higheſt object of our joy, and may drown and ſwallow up all the excuſes or pretences of exceſſive ſadneſs. we ought to rejoice in God, not

only that he is our God, but that he is God infinitely holy, and infinitely happy; that he is ſelf-bleſſed, glorious in all things; and that his enemies cannot reach nor unſettle his throne. this is the moſt certain, and conſtant, the moſt pure and heavenly joy.

There remaineth yet one occaſion of grief, which ſome may think enough to baniſh all joy from a Chriſtian ſoul; and that is, the multitude of ſins whereof we and others are guilty. and certainly, contrition, and zeal for the honour of God, are very neceſſary duties; yet we were not born only to mourn, nor is the lamenting of ſin all we have to do in the world. we love to ſee a ſervant ſenſible of his fault, but would be ill content if on that account he did nothing but weep. ſadneſs in contrition is neceſſary to make our repentance ſerious, and ſadneſs of zeal to teſtify our concernment in God's intereſt; but on neither of theſe accounts ought we to grieve without term or meaſure. as we ought to grieve that we have offended ſo gracious a God, ſo ought we to re-

joice that the God whom we have offended is ſo gracious: and ſince the greatneſs of God's mercy is as far above our ſins, as the heavens are above the earth, our faith and joy in God's mercy ought to be far above our ſadneſs for our ſins. whereas the blaſphemies and oppoſitions of God's enemies, by his wiſdom and power, ſhall turn to his glory; our ſadneſs for theſe oppoſitions muſt end in joy, for that almighty power and ſovereign glory, which the enmity of Satan, and the world, and the fleſh, doth but make more conſpicuous by pulling againſt it.

By this time I hope it doth appear, that joy and chearfulneſs are more allowable in Chriſtians, than ſome men perhaps are ready to imagine. I ſhall add no more to this purpoſe; but that it is the privilege of a holy and religious ſoul, that every thing he meets with may afford him occaſion of joy. if he looks up to heaven, it puts him in mind of the manſions that are preparing for him; if on the earth, it rejoiceth him to think of his intereſt in him who made and go-

verns the ſame. if he conſiders the changes and revolutions of human affairs, it ſatisfies him to remember, that an unerring providence doth over-rule all their ſeeming diſorders, and makes them all ſerve to great and glorious deſigns. if he live long, he is glad of the large time he is allowed to do his work in; and, if he die ſoon, he is glad that he is ſo ſoon come to the end and reward of his work. if he be richer than his neighbours, he rejoiceth in the opportunity of obliging them; and, if they be richer than he, he rejoiceth that they have the plenty and ſplendor which riches afford, and that he wants the care and temptations that attend them. as many miſeries as he ſeeth, ſo many arguments he hath to glorify God, and rejoice in his goodneſs, ſaying, Bleſſed be God that I am not maimed like that begging ſoldier, nor frantick like that bedlamite, nor in priſon like that bankrupt, nor like that thief in ſhackles, nor in perpetual trouble like that counſellor of ſtate.

But joy is a paſſion ſo pleaſing unto nature, that moſt men are eaſily perſua-

ded unto it, thoſe eſpecially who have the leaſt ground for it. and what we have ſaid hitherto, may have the ill luck to be miſtaken or wreſted by profane perſons, for the defence of their jollity and frolickſome mirth. but it ſhould be conſidered, that our exhortation to chearfulneſs and joy, preſuppoſeth men to be good and religious, and is addreſſed to them on that preſumption: for we ſhould never encourage men to rejoice and be chearful, while they are at enmity with their Maker, at feud with the infinite Majeſty of heaven, whoſe leaſt frown is enough to confound them. we would not have men to dance on the brink of hell, nor wantonly exult in the way that leads to deſtruction. another temper would better become their unhappy condition, and they ought to be thinking how a timely ſorrow may lay a ſure foundation for a laſting joy. again, the joy which we commend, is a quite different thing from that levity and diſſolution of ſpirit which ſome perſons would cover under that name. we allow not that light airy temper that is

inconſiſtent with gravity and ſeriouſneſs. we would not have a man's whole life become a ſport, nor mirth to become his whole employment. of ſuch laughter we may ſay, with the wiſe man, 'that 'it is mad; and of mirth, what doth it?' the chearfulneſs we have been ſpeaking of, muſt ſpring from the ſenſe of the Divine goodneſs, and the conſcience of our ſincerity in his ſervice; though we are not to refuſe the aſſiſtance of innocent acts to raiſe and recruit our natural ſpirits when they faint and fail within us. finally, that our chearfulneſs and joy may be allowable, it muſt be rightly tempered. which leads me to the ſecond part of the text; which if it do not check, it doth at leaſt mix and qualify our joy; rejoice we may, but it muſt be with trembling. trembling is a natural effect and ſign of fear; and is here put for the thing ſignified. now, fear may ſeem to be the moſt uſeleſs and unprofitable paſſion in the mind: it is that which preſages miſchief and anticipates our miſeries, giving them a being before they had any, and troubling us with the

apprehenſion of thoſe evils which may never befal us, and hindering us to guard againſt many which we might have prevented; betraying thoſe ſuccours which reaſon offereth, as the wiſe ſon of David tells us. the hiſtorian, ſpeaking of the Perſians, who in their flight flung away their weapons of defence, addeth this obſervation, 'adeo timor 'ipſa auxilia reformidat:' ſuch is the nature of fear, that it not only makes us flee from danger, but from thoſe helps and ſuccours which ſhould keep it off. but, as Alexander ſaid of his fierce and ſtately horſe, 'qualem iſti equum per- 'dunt, dum eo per imperitiam uti ne- 'ſciunt!' what a brave horſe is loſt for want of skill to manage him! ſo we may ſay of fear, that they who would diſcharge it, do loſe an uſeful paſſion, not knowing how to order it. fear, doubtleſs, is an excellent inſtrument, both of reaſon and of religion. and as all our paſſions, ſo eſpecially fear, are as winds, which altho' they ſometimes drive us upon rocks, yet, rightly improved, may ſwell our ſails, and carry us on to the

haven where we would be. hence we find it ſo frequently commanded in ſcripture, and ſo profitably practiſed by wiſe and holy perſons. the queſtion then is, what kind of fear and trembling is injoined here in the text? and, firſt, as for the object, certainly the wrath and diſpleaſure of God is the moſt proper and ſuitable object of our fear: it is this that we ought to look on as the greateſt evil, and to ſhun with the greateſt care. and this fear, if rightly ſeated in our ſouls, will make us very watchful againſt the ſmalleſt ſins, and make us heartily ſorry for the offences of others. but though the fear of God's diſpleaſure be more excellent and uſeful, yet the fear of our own miſery is not to be condemned: it is uſeful, not only to wicked perſons, whom though it do not make good, yet it keeps them from being worſe; but alſo to holy perſons, whom the fear of hell hath many times helped forward to heaven. our Saviour himſelf adviſeth us to 'fear him who can caſt 'both body and ſoul into hell-fire.' and, that we may not forget it, he drives it

home with an ingemination, 'yea, I say 'unto you, fear him:' where we are to obſerve, that *qui* imports as much as *quia*; the deſcription of the perſon carrieth the reaſon for which we ought to fear him. it were indeed to be wiſhed, that our ſouls were knit unto God by the more noble and generous paſſion of love, and that we needed neither rewards to draw us to our duty, nor puniſhments to chaſe us to our happineſs; and that we loved goodneſs as Cato was ſaid to do virtue, becauſe he could not do otherways. but this is, with the hiſtorian, 'votum accommodare, non 'hiſtoriam;' to preſent a wiſh, rather than a character of an ordinary Chriſtian; or, as Xenophon did with Cyrus, to deſcribe rather what he ſhould be, than what he is. *perfect love*, as St. John tells us, *caſteth out all fear*: but, while our love is imperfect, it leaves room for ſome fear. hell is certainly in our creed as well as heaven; and as the fear of it is ordinarily the firſt ſtep of converſion, ſo it may be of uſe to quicken us, and puſh us forward all along

through our journey toward heaven. but if Chriſtians fear may have hell for its object, what kind of fear may this be? in a word, it ought not to be ſuch an anxious and troubleſome fear, as may diſturb our tranquillity, or extinguiſh our joy, or diſcourage our endeavours; but ſo rational and modeſt, as may make us reverend in our love, and modeſt in our confidence, and cautious in our joy, that it neither betray us to, nor vent itſelf in any unſeemly expreſſions.

And thus much of the duty recommended in the text. 'tis high time now to apply theſe generals to the preſent occaſion. we are aſſembled this day to commemorate the greateſt bleſſing that ever was beſtowed on the children of men; a bleſſing wherein all the nations of the world are concerned, and yet whoſe fruits do as entirely redound to every good man, as if it had been deſigned for him alone; a mercy that doth at once aſtoniſh and rejoice the angels, who in compariſon of us are unconcerned in it. theſe *mountains* do leap for joy, becauſe the

valleys were filled with a fruitful ſhower: for when thoſe glorious ſpirits did behold God ſtooping to the condition of a man, and man raiſed above the lowlineſs of his ſtate, and the happineſs of all the angels, they were tranſported with admiration of the myſtery, and joy for the felicity of their fellow-creatures; and did with the greateſt chearfulneſs perform the embaſſies they were ſent upon in this great affair. for having before advertiſed the bleſſed virgin of her miraculous conception, leſt her modeſty ſhould have been offended at ſo ſtrange an accident, and having removed the ſuſpicion of her betrothed husband, they rejoiced to bring the firſt news of that infinite mercy which we remember this day. ‘ for as certain ſhepherds were ‘ feeding their flocks by night, an angel ‘ of the Lord appeared unto them, and ‘ the glory of the Lord ſhone round-a- ‘ bout them;’ and when this glorious appearance had confounded their ſenſes, and almoſt ſcattered their underſtanding, the angel ſaid unto them, ‘ Fear not: ‘ for behold, I bring unto you tidings of

'great joy, which ſhall be unto all peo-
'ple. for unto you is born this day in
'the city of David, a Saviour, which is
'Chriſt the Lord. and ſuddenly there
'was with the angel a multitude of the
'heavenly hoſt,' the whole choir of glo-
rious ſpirits, who all joined in this hea-
venly anthem, 'Glory to God on high,
'on earth peace, and good-will towards
'men.' and may not that help to height-
en and advance our joy and our thank-
fulneſs? can we be inſenſible of our hap-
pineſs, when angels do ſo heartily con-
gratulate it? 'tis a nativity which we
celebrate, and any birth doth much re-
joice perſons intereſted: a woman for-
gets her pangs when a man-child is
born into the world.

But, that our joy and thankfulneſs may be the more excited, we ſhall, firſt, conſider the excellency of the perſon who was born; ſecondly, the deſign of his birth; and, thirdly, glance a little at the circumſtances of it.

Firſt, then, he was no common and ordinary perſon whoſe birth occaſions our joy. if we ſhall but fix our eyes on

his human nature, and conſider thoſe excellencies that were obvious to the eyes of the world, we ſhall yet acknowledge, that never ſuch a perſon appeared on the face of the earth. it is he whoſe nativity was promiſed immediately after the fall, and ſo exactly pointed at by the Prophets many hundred years before it happened, that the Jews could tell the place, and the very Heathens had ſome knowledge of the time: for the world was big with expectation, that the prophecies ſhould then be fulfilled which foretold the birth of a great perſon. laſtly, it is he whoſe very infancy not only ſtartled a king, and made him fear his throne, but alſo affrighted the powers of darkneſs, and ſilenced the Heathen oracles, 'Ille puer Hebraeus, &c.;' whoſe childhood puzzled the knowledge of the aged, and confounded the doctors of the law; who ruled the courſe of nature, and made the ſtrong winds obey him, and could walk on the billows of the ſeas as on a pavement; who fed multitudes by his word, and healed all manner of diſeaſes, without medicine;

who could command them to leap that were cripple, and make them ſee the heavens and the day who had been born blind; and who could caſt devils out of their poſſeſſions, and reſtore the frantick to their wits; who could break the gates of death, and open the doors of the grave, and call back the ſpirits to the buried carcaſes.

It is he who, by the miniſtry of twelve fiſhermen, made his religion, though contrary to the corrupt affections and carnal intereſts of men, quickly ſubdue the known world, and made it ſubmit to a crucified King. the doctrine which he taught, maſtered the underſtanding of the moſt learned philoſophers, conquered the ſpirits of the moſt valiant commanders, and outwitted the cunning of the ſubtleſt politicians: it cancelled the ceremonies of the Jew, confounded the wiſdom of the Greek, and inſtructed the rudeneſs of the Barbarian; and remains ſtill in the world a conſtant evidence of the author's wiſdom and power. and what ſhall we ſpeak of the goodneſs and moral en-

dowments of that human nature, which were as miraculous as his power! nay, all his miracles were inſtances of the one as well as of the other. ſhould we ſpeak of his ardent piety and devotion, his love to God, and his zeal for his honour, his amiable meekneſs and humility, his univerſal charity and compaſſion even toward his bitter enemies, his venerable purity and temperance, that noble contempt of the world, and all thoſe other virtues which ſhined ſo eminently in his whole converſation; a ſermon were too little for every particular. but this is not all: he was not only far above other men, but infinitely above the angels; being perſonally united to the Divine nature. he was God as well as man. and, by communication of properties, it may be ſaid, that he whom we now behold in a cradle, hath his throne in the heaven, and filleth all things by his immenſity; that he who is wrapt in ſwaddling cloaths, is now clothed in infinite glory; and he whom we find in a ſtable among beaſts, is the ſame with him encircled with millions

of angels. in a word, that great perſon whoſe nativity we celebrate, is divinely embodied, *God made fleſh.* this union of the Divine and human nature, is a myſtery great enough to confound our underſtanding, but not to trouble or ſhake our faith, who know many things to be, which we cannot know how they are, and are not able to give any account of the union betwixt the ſoul and the body, or of the parts of nature among themſelves, which yet we never call in queſtion.

And thus much of the dignity of Chriſt's perſon, which is the firſt ground of our joy; we proceed to the ſecond, the deſign of his birth. he was Lord of the world; but came not into it to exerciſe dominion, nor, as the Jews expected, to procure their temporal redemption, and reſtore the kingdom to Iſrael. he came not for ſo mean a purpoſe as the Jews expected, to procure their temporal redemption, to make his followers rich and honourable, fortunate or conſpicuous in the world; nay, both by precept and example he taught

them to contemn and deſpiſe all ſuch empty trifles: but he came to deliver his people from everlaſting deſtruction, and from the captivity of ſin, and to teach them how by a holy life they might obtain an endleſs happineſs. he came not indeed to purchaſe us a liberty to ſin, without hazard, and then to cover all our iniquities with his righteouſneſs; to let us live as we liſt, and aſſure us of pardon. nay, it had neither been conſiſtent with his love to God, to have procured pardon for obſtinate and incorrigible rebels; nor ſo great a benefit to us, to have obtained remiſſion without ſanctification. had we been delivered from all other puniſhment, ſin itſelf would have made us miſerable. but Chriſt came into the world to 'ſave his people from their ſins *,' as well as from the diſmal conſequences of them; and to procure for us, 'that, 'being delivered out of the hands of 'our enemies, we might ſerve him with-'out fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs 'before him †.' in a word, Chriſt came

* Matth. i. 21. † Luke i. 74. 75.

into the world to advance the glory of God, and the happineſs of the earth, by reſtoring us to the favour of our Maker, and a conformity to him. and certainly, if we have any ſenſe of the evil of ſin or the miſery of hell, of the beauty of holineſs or the glory of heaven, it muſt needs be a matter of great joy, to celebrate the birth of him who doth deliver us from the one, and gives us aſſurance of the other.

It remaineth yet, that we ſpeak of the circumſtances of the nativity which we celebrate; and many things preſent themſelves full of comfort and inſtruction. we ſhall only obſerve our Saviour's coming into the world after that manner which did beſt ſuit with his deſign. indeed when a man ſhould hear of the Son of God's coming down from heaven, and making a progreſs into the lower world, he would be apt to think that his appearance would be with the greateſt ſplendor and magnificence, and that the glory of heaven ſhould continually attend and ſignalize his perſon; at leaſt, that all the princes in the world ſhould

be ſummoned to attend his reception, and that the heaven ſhould bow at his preſence, and the earth tremble at the approach of his majeſty, and that all the clouds ſhould clap together in an univerſal thunder, to welcome his appearance. but, inſtead of all this pomp and grandeur, he ſlips into the world (as they ſay) *incognito*, is born in a village, diſcovered by ſome poor ſhepherds, and found by them in a ſtable, and ſuch an homely cradle as that afforded, only attended by his poor mother; who, tho' of Royal blood, had nothing but goodneſs to make her eminent. and his education was anſwerable to his obſcure birth, and his whole life a courſe of humility and ſelf-denial. now, certainly, this far beſt agrees with the deſign of his appearance, who came not on ſo mean an errand as to dazzle the eyes of mankind with the appearance of his glory, nor to amaze them with the terribleneſs of his majeſty, much leſs to make a ſhew of the riches and gallantry of the world among them; but to *bring life and immortality to light*, and lead

men to eternal happineſs. in order to which, it was neceſſary, that, by his example, as well as doctrine, he ſhould diſparage the vanities of the world, and bring them out of that credit and eſteem they had gotten among fooliſh men.

I ſhall proceed no further on this ſubject. I hope it doth appear, that we have great reaſon to rejoice in the exaltation of the human nature, and the great ſalvation purchaſed to us by the incarnation of the Son of God. I ſhall add, that even this joy admits of holy fear; even on this occaſion we muſt rejoice with trembling. ſalvation is come into the world, but wo to them that neglect it! the goſpel is preached; but there is great danger in ſlighting it. let us therefore 'fear, leſt a promiſe 'being left us of entering into his reſt, 'any of us ſhould come ſhort of it*.' little cauſe have obſtinate ſinners to rejoice on this feſtival. the time is coming that they ſhall wiſh that either Chriſt had never come into the world, or they

* Heb. iv. 1.

had never heard of him: 'behold, this 'child is ſet for the riſe and fall of ma-'ny†.' and they that are not the better, ſhall be the worſe for his coming. one way I muſt name, that many men ſet this child for their own fall, when they make this ſolemn anniverſary an opportunity of ſinning and debauchery; as if it were indeed a *drunken Bacchus*, and not a *holy Jeſus*, whom they worſhipped. what! ſirs, becauſe God became man, muſt we therefore become beaſts? or think we to honour that child with diſſoluteneſs, who came to the world on deſigns of *holineſs?* this it is, no doubt, that gives many men a prejudice againſt the feſtival itſelf, and perhaps is their moſt ſpecious argument. we know an anſwer; but you may, and ought to afford another, by removing any ground for ſuch a pretence. indeed a forenoon's ſermon will never compenſate an afternoon's debauch; nor will your ſervice in the church juſtify your intemperance at home. but as hereby at leaſt ſome time is redeemed from the too frequent

† Luke ii. 34.

courſes of the day, ſo I wiſh the time we ſpend here, may have ſome influence towards the right improvement of the reſt; that our behaviour on this ſolemnity may be ſuch as ſuits with the infinite holineſs of that perſon whom we profeſs to honour, 'that we may ſerve 'the Lord with fear, and rejoice with 'trembling.'

ON THE PASSION OF OUR SAVIOUR.

LAM. i. 12.

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.

WE are to-morrow, God willing, to be employed in one of the highest and most solemn offices of our religion, to commemorate the death and sufferings of the blessed Jesus, and to receive the sacred pledge of his dying: and how much may the everlasting interests of our souls depend upon the right performing of this work!

It is not time now to discourse of the nature and ends of that sacrament we are about to celebrate; we are to suppose you already instructed in these: we shall rather fix our thoughts on those things which may have a more immediate influence to dispose us for so near and solemn an address unto God, and to assist and direct us in it. and I know

nothing more proper for this purpoſe, than the ſerious conſideration of thoſe ſufferings of our Saviour, which are to be ſymbolically repreſented unto us in that holy ordinance.

This paſſionate complaint of the Prophet Jeremiah, which we have read, though in its firſt and literal ſenſe it may refer to the ſad condition of the Jewiſh nation and the holy city under the Babyloniſh captivity, (as many prophecies concerning the Meſſiah had a literal completion in thoſe who were his types); yet certainly in its higheſt and fulleſt ſenſe it is only applicable to our bleſſed Saviour: of him alone it could be ſaid, in ſtrictneſs and propriety of ſpeech, that *there was never ſorrow like his ſorrow.*

Let us then conſider the words as our Saviour's complaint of the dulneſs and ſtupidity of men, who go up and down in the world, who come and paſs, without regarding his ſufferings, which were ſo grievous, wherein themſelves are ſo nearly concerned. and from thence I would conſider theſe three things.

1. The greatneſs of our Saviour's ſufferings, expreſſed in theſe words, 'See if there be any ſorrow like unto 'my ſorrow.'

2. Our intereſt and concernment in them, inſinuated in that paſſionate interrogation, 'Is it nothing to you?'

3. That his ſufferings ought not to be paſſed by, but ſeriouſly regarded and conſidered: 'Is it nothing to you, all ye 'that paſs by?' &c.

I. Let us reflect on our Saviour's ſufferings. but O where ſhall we begin to recount them! his whole life, from the manger, his uneaſy cradle, unto his croſs and grave, was a continued tract of ſufferings. he did all along anſwer that character given of him by the Prophet, 'A man of ſorrows, and acquainted 'with grief.'

To ſay nothing of the meanneſs of his birth, and the pains of circumciſion, the perſecutions of his infancy, his poverty and want, his travail and wearineſs, his faſting and watchings, his ſweat and his tears, and all the other infirmities incident to our human na-

ture, and inconveniencies attending a poor and ſtraitened eſtate; he could not but lead a very ſad and afflicted life, conſidering that he lived in a perverſe and wicked generation, and the continual trouble of being witneſs to the follies and miſcarriages of wicked men; to hear and ſee diſhonour done unto God, by the profaneneſs of ſome, and hypocriſy of others; to obſerve the covetouſneſs and injuſtice, the fraud and oppreſſion, the malice and envy, and all the abominable luſts that abounded in the world in his days. we are commonly little concerned in the intereſts of religion; and therefore do apprehend but little trouble in theſe. but, if the ſoul of righteous Lot was grieved with the iniquities of the place where he lived, and if David is put to cry out, 'Wo is me that I ſo-'journ in Meſech, that I dwell in the 'tents of Kedar*;' how deeply do we think the bleſſed ſoul of the holy Jeſus muſt needs have been pierced, by every blaſphemous word that he heard, by every wicked action he beheld! doubt-

* Pſal. cxx. 5.

leſs it was no ſmall ſorrow that made him cry out, 'O faithleſs and perverſe 'generation, how long ſhall I be with 'you? how long ſhall I ſuffer you †?' nor was he a little moved, when his zeal did carry him to that ſeverity, which, if we did not conſider the cauſe, would ſeem very unlike to the wonted meekneſs of his ſpirit, in whipping the traders out of the temple. add hereunto his tender compaſſion towards men, which could not but make him exceeding ſorry, to ſee them fruſtrate the method of his mercy, and ruin themſelves by their enmity againſt him; to hear them reproach the holy doctrine which he taught, and undervalue the miracles which he performed, or elſe condemn them as the unlawful effects of magical skill; that though 'he came unto his own, yet his 'own received him not *;' though he ſpake as never man ſpake, and did ſuch works as would have converted Tyre and Sidon, yet did they baffle their own reaſon, and perſiſt in their infidelity, becauſe, forſooth, they knew the place

† Matth. xvii. 17. * John i. 11.

and manner of his education; as though his being reputed the carpenter's ſon, had been a ſufficient anſwer to all that he could ſay or do. this was the occaſion of his tears over that wretched and ungrateful city: 'O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them that are ſent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not †! If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes ‡.'

We have not time to reflect on all the ſad paſſages which occur in the hiſtory of our Saviour's life; let us fix our eyes a little on ſome of the laſt ſcenes, and we ſhall find them the blackeſt that ever were acted on the human nature. at the approach of death, it is ſaid, *he began to be ſorrowful*, as if he had never felt any grief before. his former afflictions were like ſcattered drops of rain; but, in

† Matth. xxiii. 37. ‡ Luke xix. 42.

this great deluge, all the fountains beneath, and all the windows of heaven were opened; the wrath of God againſt a ſinful world, the malice and cruelty of men, the rage and fury of devils, break out together againſt him. if we take the meaſure of his ſufferings by the apprehenſions which he had of them before, we ſhall find, that, when he is talking with his diſciples about them, and encouraging himſelf and his followers with the aſſurance of the reward ſet before them; yet he doth not diſſemble the fear and trouble wherewith he was ſeized: 'Now is my ſoul troubled; and 'what ſhall I ſay? Father, ſave me from 'this hour' *, &c. certainly, if there had been no more in his ſufferings than what is commonly incident to human nature, as to endure pain or death, he who had a perfect innocency, the freeſt and moſt entire reſignation, the fulleſt aſſurance of the reward to come, would never have been half ſo much affrighted with the apprehenſions of them. the view of that ſad night's tranſaction,

* John xii. 27.

wherein he was delivered into the hands of ſinners, preſents us with a ſtrange and amazing ſpectacle. look into the garden, and behold the Son of God proſtrate with his face upon the ground, in the ſaddeſt diſcompoſure of ſpirit that could poſſibly conſiſt with his perfect innocency. he was ſorrowful and very heavy, and tells his diſciples, 'My ſoul 'is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto 'death.' it ſeems, had he remained long in this condition, his own grief would have killed him. here it was that he ſuffered that which the Evangeliſt calleth an *agony;* but what the nature and meaſures of it were, he alone can tell who did feel it. it is not poſſible for us to comprehend the mixture of that bitter cup; yet we may gueſs at ſome of the ingredients of it. and, firſt, without queſtion, he had a clearer foreſight of that painful and curſed death which he was ſo ſhortly after to undergo. this king of terrors did repreſent himſelf unto him in his greateſt pomp, clothed with all the circumſtances of horror. and even this could not but be very

dreadful, perhaps more to him than it would have been to ſome other perſon. there is a ſort of natural ſtoutneſs and courage depending much on the temper and conſtitution of the body, and which doth commonly accompany the roughest and moſt ſtubborn natures; when thoſe of a more ſweet and benign diſpoſition, are many times obnoxious to deeper impreſſions of fear. and it will not derogate from the honour of our bleſſed Saviour, though we ſhould ſuppoſe, that, amongſt other infirmities, he might be much liable to this natural and innocent paſſion. the true greatneſs of the ſoul, doth not conſiſt in the vigour of the natural ſpirits, nor the ſturdy boldneſs of an undaunted humour; but in a holy ſtedfaſtneſs and reſolution to undergo thoſe things which are dreadful to nature.

But certainly the fear of death was neither the only, nor the greateſt thing that troubled our Saviour's ſpirit at that time. he had another ſad and more dreadful proſpect, the heinous and innumerable ſins of mankind, whoſe nature he had

taken, and whoſe iniquities he was to bear. he ſaw the whole world lying in wickedneſs, and ready to drop into eternal flames; he ſaw the anger of God kindled, and his hand lifted up; and he knew, that the ſtroke would light upon himſelf, and that the chaſtiſement of our peace was to be upon him.

And, doubtleſs, it added not a little unto his grief, that he knew that all he had done, and all that he was about to ſuffer, would be ſlighted and deſpiſed by the greateſt part of mankind. it grieved him to think, that many thouſands, who were to be called by his name, would prove ſo baſe and unthankful, as to reject his love, and baffle his paſſion, and make a by-word of his blood and wounds; that one would prefer a ſtrumpet, another his cups, a third his gold and money, to the mercies of a gracious God, and the unſpeakable kindneſs of a dying Saviour.

Briefly, in this agony, our Saviour did ſtruggle with the violent paſſion of fear and grief; which racked his joints, and ſtretched his ſinews, till, in that cold night, and in the open air, a ſweat, and

that of blood, did iſſue forth, and moiſten his garments, and tumbled down unto the ground. now he came from 'Bozra with his garments dyed red; 'he had trodden the wine-preſs alone, 'and of the people there was none with 'him.' and now behold and ſee, 'if 'there was any ſorrow like unto his ſor-'row.'

But now he awaketh his drowſy diſciples, and calls them to riſe and be going; 'for behold he is at hand that be-'trays him.' and ſcarce had he ſpoke the word, when behold the traitor, and with him a great multitude from the chief prieſts, and elders of the people. they come out as againſt a thief with ſwords and ſtaves, for to take him. that monſter of ingratitude gives them the ſignal; and, with an horrid impudence, dares approach his infamous and ſacrilegious lips to that ſacred and venerable face; which we may reckon as the firſt wound he received from his enemies. O what an indignity, to be kiſſed by a traitor, an apoſtate, an enemy to God, poſſeſſed by the devil, and who was to

be lodged in hell ere twenty four hours expired ! and O the inſuperable meekneſs of our bleſſed Saviour, who ſuffers the indignity, and checks it with no harſher terms than this, 'friend, where-'fore art thou come ? Judas, betrayeſt 'thou the Son of man with a kiſs ?' then he turneth unto the armed bands, and ſaid unto them, 'whom ſeek ye ? they 'anſwered him, Jeſus of Nazareth. 'Jeſus ſaith unto them, I am he.' the meekneſs of this anſwer aſtoniſhed the ſoldiers, and the power that accompanied it, made them go back and fall to the ground. and why did they not fall into hell ? the wicked enterprize they were preſently about to do did juſtly deſerve it ; and how eaſy was it for him to have done it ? but his goodneſs reſtrained him ; he meaned them no harm, but intended his fall to help them to riſe ; that the conſideration of it, and the other evidences of his divinity, might one day bring them to a ſenſe of their ſin. nor will he any further employ his miraculous power, but only in the cure of an enemy, whom his too forward diſ-

ciple had wounded. but this doth not abate their malice. they lay hold on him, and drag him away, in great hurry and uproar, through that city where he had done ſo much good, and into which he had been lately received with joy and triumph, and loud acclamations: 'bleſ-'ſed is he that cometh in the name of 'the Lord.' they carry him from Annas to Caiaphas, from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, from Herod to Pilate again; treating him with all the indignities, all the inſtances of ſcorn and contempt that their malice could ſuggeſt unto them. now, tho' our extreme impatience of ignominies and affronts, do much proceed from the pride and haughtineſs of our ſpirits; yet is there in them a contrariety even to the innocent conſtitution of the human nature. ſhame and diſgrace are troubleſome to all ingenuous ſpirits; ſo that, tho' they could not raiſe any immoderate paſſion in our bleſſed Saviour, yet his bleſſed ſpirit had a great abhorrence and deteſtation of that baſe and unworthy uſage; which was infinitely heightened by the worth

and excellency of the perſon who ſuffered it. what loyal heart can read or hear of the indignities done by the rude ſoldiers to our late Sovereign, but with regret and abhorrence! but, alas! what are they, if compared with thoſe that were put upon the King of heaven, when they ſcoffed and reproached him, when they ſmote him on the cheek, and bound thoſe hands which had cured ſo many diſeaſes, and defiled that ſacred face with ſpittle, which ſaints and angels delight to behold? all which he ſuffered with that meekneſs which the Prophet had foretold: 'he gave his back to the 'ſmiters, and his cheeks to them that 'plucked off the hair: he did not hide 'his face from ſhame and ſpitting*.' they would needs be ingenious in their ſcoffings, and mock him in all his offices. he was a Prophet, and they deſire him to propheſy who it was that did ſmite him: he was a Prieſt, and they bid him ſave himſelf as he did others: he was a King, and they crown him with thorns, and array him with ſcarlet, and put a

* Iſ. l. 6.

reed in his hand, and, in scorn, salute him, *King of the Jews*. add unto this the violence done unto his virgin modesty, when he was stript naked in the view of the rude multitude. it is reported of some virgin martyrs, that God, pitying their grief and trouble to have their nakedness discovered, when they were to be stript of their cloaths, did cover them with a vail of light, and send them to a modest and desired death. but the holy Jesus, who refused no shame, endured also this of nakedness, that we might be clothed with his righteousness.

But though it pleased their malice to have him exposed to all indignities imaginable; yet nothing would satisfy it but his torment and his death. he hath already had trial of cruel mockings, and now he must have scourgings too: they whip him with violent and unrelenting hands, tearing his tender flesh, and making long furrows in it. and, now, *behold the man!* behold him in that sad miserable plight wherein Pilate brought him forth, thinking to have appeased

the malice of the Jews! his head pierced with briers, his face blue with ſtrokes, his hands bound, that he could not ſo much as wipe off the blood which trickled down his eyes, his whole body diſcoloured with the marks of the ſcourge! from the top of his head, to the ſole of his foot, there was no ſoundneſs in him. *Was there ever any ſorrow like unto his ſorrow?*

There remaineth yet another ſcene, a very ſad and diſmal one. when nothing could prevail with the Jews, Pilate yieldeth, and delivereth our Saviour to their hands. they carry him away, ſo faint and weak with what he had already endured, that he could not bear the weight of his croſs, but another muſt carry it for him. but now they nail him unto it, hang him up betwixt two thieves, as the moſt notorious offender of the three. it cannot be expreſſed how painful this kind of death was. the very ſtretching forth of the arms without any weight, can hardly be endured any conſiderable time: but, when the weight of the body did hang upon them, and

thereby tear the wounds that were made in the hands; when this torment was continued, till pain alone had overcome the power of nature, and forced the ſoul to diſlodge without any hurt to the vital parts, ſcarce any could be invented more dreadful and cruel; to ſay nothing of the ſhame that attended it, being only deſtined for the meaneſt ſlaves, and the greateſt offenders, thoſe whom the lowneſs of their condition, or the greatneſs of their crimes, made unworthy of any reſpect. in this ſad and painful poſture did our Saviour hang, without any thing to comfort him. the holy angels, who were accuſtomed to ſerve him upon other occaſions, do now diſappear, not one of them to ſtrengthen or relieve him. as for men, miſerable comforters are they all: the ſoldiers ſcoff him; thoſe that paſs by exult over him; a companion of his ſufferings adds unto them by his reproaches: his diſciples had forſaken him, one of them had betrayed him, another forſworn him, a third run away from him naked, that he might not be

apprehended with him. indeed ſome devout women followed him out of the city; but their compaſſion did ſo little eaſe his grief, that he deſired them to reſerve their tears for the calamities that were to befal themſelves: 'Daugh-'ters of Jeruſalem, weep not for me, 'but weep for yourſelves, and for your children *.' he beheld the two perſons that were the deareſt to him in the world, his mother, and his friend, ſitting under the croſs: but all that they could do, was but to lament and mourn; and this but redoubled his ſorrow. his bleſſed mother was bathed in tears; and felt the effects of old Simeon's prophecy, that *a ſword ſhould pierce through her ſoul.* and the beloved diſciple, who was wont to lie in his boſom, lay ſtill very near his heart; and it was a real ſuffering unto him, to ſee the anguiſh and ſorrow whereinto his ſufferings had caſt them. whither then could he look for comfort, but unto heaven? to whom could he flee, but to the arms of his Father? but O what ſtrange, what aſtoniſhing words

* Luke xxiii. 28.

do we hear! *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* wonder, O earth! be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens! at this men and angels admire and ſtand amazed! goodneſs and innocence itſelf forſaken by the author and fountain of goodneſs, the Son of God deſerted by his heavenly Father! certainly the ſoul of our bleſſed Saviour was ſtill united to the Divine nature, and was ſtill as dear unto his Father as before; only the joyful ſenſe of the Divine love was ſuſpended for a while, the faculties of his ſoul were diſcompoſed, and a vail, as it were, drawn before the eyes of his mind, which intercepted the light of his Father's countenance; and that he felt not thoſe refreſhing emanations which, in the courſe of his life, the Deity conveyed unto him. and, in that ſad moment, his mind ſeems to have been ſo intent upon his ſufferings, that he was diverted from the actual conſideration of that glory which he purchaſed by them. now, to be thus ſuſpended from the perfect viſion of God, to be divorced, as it were, from himſelf, and to loſe the ſenſe of thoſe

inward comforts which were wont to ſuſtain him in all his adverſities, how cutting muſt it needs be to his ſoul, ſo pure and holy, and which had ſo high a value for the Divine love? conſider then, and ſee, *if ever there was any ſorrow like unto this ſorrow.*

Now it is finiſhed, the ſharp conflict is at a cloſe; one cry more, and the bleſſed *Jeſus bowed down his head, and yielded up the ghoſt.* no wonder then if the powers of heaven and earth be moved. the earth trembleth and ſhaketh, the rocks rent, the graves are opened, the vail of the temple was rent in two, the ſun himſelf ſhrunk in his beams, and darkneſs covered the face of the earth; which a learned man of Greece is ſaid to have obſerved at that time, and from thence to have concluded, that either the God of nature ſuffered violence, or that the frame of the world was about to diſſolve: 'Aut Deus naturae patitur, 'aut machina mundi ſolvitur.' thus we have given you ſome rude imperfect hints of his great and unſpeakable ſufferings. but O how little of them do we

underſtand to very good purpoſe! it was for this reaſon the ancient fathers of the Greek church in their liturgy, after they have recounted all the particular pains as they are ſet down in his paſſion, and by all and every one of them called for mercy, do after all ſhut up with this ſupplication: 'by thine unknown ſorrows and ſufferings, felt by 'thee, but not diſtinctly known by 'us, have mercy upon us, and ſave 'us.'

II. We proceed, in the next place, to conſider the intereſt that we have in the ſufferings of our Saviour: *Is it nothing to you?* have you no intereſt nor concernment at all in them? much, certainly, every way. we were the occaſion of his ſufferings, and the benefits of them redound unto us. when we ſee a perſon undergo any ſad and grievous puniſhment, we cannot chuſe but inquire into the grounds and occaſions of their ſufferings; and the rather if they have the reputation of innocence and integrity. and here not only the moſt innocent, but the moſt excellent perſon

that ever was in the world, undergoes thoſe dreadful ſufferings which we mentioned before; who never had done any ſin at all, *neither was guile found in his mouth* *; ſo that the judge who condemned him, behoved firſt to condemn himſelf by a ſolemn acknowledgment of his innocence. he had gone up and down all his days doing good unto men, and ſcattering bleſſings where he came; healing the ſick, reſtoring ſight to the blind, and making the lame to walk, the dumb to ſpeak, and the deaf to hear; feeding the hungry, and inſtructing all that would vouchſafe to hear him. for which of all theſe good works is he puniſhed? death is the wages of ſin; how comes he to die that knew no ſin? the Prophet Iſaiah gives us the anſwer: 'ſurely, he hath born our griefs, 'and carried our ſorrows: yet we did e-'ſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and 'afflicted. but he was wounded for our 'tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our 'iniquities: the chaſtiſement of our 'peace was upon him, and by his ſtripes

* 1 Pet. ii. 22.

'we are healed. all we like ſheep have 'gone aſtray: we have turned every 'one to his own way, and the Lord 'hath laid on him the iniquity of us 'all *. Meſſiah was cut off, but not 'for himſelf †. he bare our ſins in his 'own body on the tree ‡; and gave his 'life a ranſom for many ††.' the race of mankind, by their apoſtacy from God, were become liable to his wrath, and all the dreadful effects of his vengeance: the eternal Son of God, the Wiſdom of the Father, whoſe delights were always with the ſons of men, reſolveth to make up the breach, and reſtore us again unto his Father's love: but firſt he muſt repair the honour of God, and ſecure the authority of the divine law; which could not be done, but by ſome ſignal evidence of God's diſpleaſure againſt ſin, and ſome valuable compenſation of the puniſhment which had been denounced againſt it: and therefore himſelf was pleaſed to take our nature upon him, appear in the ſimilitude of ſinful fleſh, to

* Iſ. liii. 4. 5. 6.
† Dan. ix. 26.
‡ 1 Pet. ii. 24.
†† Matth. xx. 28.

lead a miſerable and afflicted life in the world, and at laſt to offer it up as a propitiation for us; 'that mercy and 'truth might meet together, and righ-'teouſneſs and peace might kiſs each o-'ther *; and that God might at once 'be juſt, and alſo the juſtifier of him that 'believeth in Jeſus †.' thus then the bleſſed Jeſus endured all theſe dreadful ſufferings for us and for our ſins. in vain do we exclaim againſt the treaſon of *Judas*, the malice of the *Jews*, the injuſtice of *Pilate;* we have ourſelves and our iniquities to blame: our covetouſneſs and ambition expoſed him to poverty and contempt, our exceſs and intemperance made him hunger and thirſt, our levity and fooliſh mirth were the occaſion of the anguiſh and bitterneſs of his ſoul, our ſenſual and ſinful pleaſures were the occaſion of all the pains and tortures which he endured. and is it nothing unto us? ſhall we think ourſelves unconcerned in theſe ſad effects, whereof we were the unhappy cauſe.

* Pſal. lxxxv. 10. † Rom. iii. 26.

Again, we are concerned in our Saviour's ſufferings, as the benefits of them redound unto us. 'by his ſtripes 'we are healed. we have redemption 'through his blood, even the forgive-'neſs of our ſins ‡.' God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them. we have acceſs unto the throne of God, and 'boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by 'the blood of Jeſus, by a new and living 'way which he hath conſecrated for us, 'through the vail, that is to ſay, his 'fleſh. †' but this is not all: 'God 'hath not only ſet him forth as a pro-'pitiation, through faith in his blood, 'for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt *;' but doth alſo, for his ſake, beſtow on us that grace, whereby we may be enabled to ſerve him in holineſs and righteouſneſs all the days of our lives. an *amneſty*, or act of oblivion for paſt offences, would never have ſerved the turn; we ſhould preſently have run ourſelves upon another ſcore: nay, ſin itſelf had

‡ Col. i. 14. † Heb. x. 19. 20.
* Rom. iii. 25.

been enough to make us miſerable, though no other puniſhment had been inflicted upon us: and therefore he does not only cover our ſins, but cures them; he forgives all our iniquities, and healeth all our diſeaſes; as we are juſtified by his ſufferings, 'ſo we are ſanctified 'too through the offering of the body 'of Jeſus Chriſt once for all *.' in a word, by the merits of our Saviour we are both reconciled unto God, and made partakers of the Divine nature; we are both delivered from everlaſting darkneſs, and made meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light. and now is it nothing to us? can we think ourſelves unconcerned in theſe ſufferings, from which we reap ſo great, ſo unſpeakable advantages?

III. Having ſpoken of the greatneſs of our Saviour's ſufferings, and the intereſt which we have in them, we think we ſhould need to ſay little of the third particular which we propoſed: you cannot but be convinced, that we ought to regard and conſider them. were it

* Heb. x. 10.

nothing to us, the very ſtrangeneſs of the thing would deſerve notice. the holy angels deſire to pry into this myſtery; they will contemplate and admire it to all eternity. and ſurely we are far more nearly concerned. what an unaccountable dulneſs and negligence is it then, for men to go up and down the world amuſing themſelves with every trifle, hearing and telling of news about matters of the ſmalleſt importance, and never to conſider the ſtupendous ſufferings of their dying Saviour! they walk to and fro, they come and paſs, and ſcarce vouchſafe to look upon him; or, if they chance to caſt their eyes that way, it is a very ſhort and overly view; they preſently turn them away. and this occaſions the complaint of the text, *Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by?* but ſure I am we can no where behold an object ſo worthy of our moſt ſerious and ſolemn regards. the whole world does not afford ſo uſeful and edifying a proſpect. here it is that we may beſt learn the horrid and heinous nature of ſin, which could not be pardoned at a

ſmaller rate. here it is that we may diſcover moſt of the Divine bounty and goodneſs to mankind, and the inexpreſſible love of our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer; which are the moſt important leſſons that we can learn. this made the bleſſed Apoſtle to 'determine to know 'nothing but Chriſt, and him crucified*; 'to count all things but loſs, for the ex-'cellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Je-'ſus his Lord‡.' let me therefore exhort you to fix the eyes of your mind, and call up your moſt ſerious attention; reach hither the hand of your faith, and thruſt it into the hole of your Saviour's ſide; put your fingers into the print of the nails; lay to heart all the paſſages of his lamentable ſtory; and this cannot chuſe but melt your hearts, unleſs they be harder than the rocks, and deafer than the bodies in the grave. let us fix our eyes, I ſay, on this aſtoniſhing object, till our eyes affect our heart†, that while we are 'muſing, the fire may 'burn.' let us mourn for thoſe ſins

* 1 Cor. ii. 2. ‡ Phil. iii. 8.

† Lam. iii. 51.

wherewith we have crucified the Lord of glory, and be grieved that ever we ſhould have put him to ſo much anguiſh and pain; and let us vow a perpetual enmity againſt our luſts and corrupt affections, which would crucify him afreſh, and put him unto open ſhame. let us conſider and admire the wonderful love of our dying Saviour, that our ſouls may be kindled with reciprocal flames, wherein we may offer up ourſelves as a living and acceptable ſacrifice unto him; that thus, 'Chriſt dwelling in our hearts by faith, we may be 'rooted and grounded in love; comprehending with all ſaints what is the 'breadth, and length, and depth, and 'height; and knowing the love of 'Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge, that 'ſo we may be filled with all the fulneſs 'of God.' ſuch meditations and exerciſes as theſe will purify and raiſe our ſouls, and beſt diſpoſe us for approaching to the table of the Lord. and the Lord pour out upon us *the ſpirit of grace and ſupplication*, that we may look upon him whom we have pierced, and mourn

for him as one mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.

A PREPARATION FOR THE HOLY SACRAMENT.

JOSH. iii. 5.

Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.

WHen God is to make any signal discovery and manifestation of himself to his people, he calleth them to solemn preparation, that they may be in a fit posture to attend and receive it. three eminent instances whereof we meet with in the travels of his ancient people of *Israel*. the first is in *Exodus* xix. 10. 11. where, being to descend upon mount Sinai to promulge a law, and enter into a covenant with them, the Lord said unto Moses, 'Go unto the 'people, and sanctify them to day and 'to morrow, and let them wash their 'cloaths, and be ready against the third 'day: for the third day the Lord 'will come down in the sight of all the 'people.' thus also, when he was at once to satisfy and punish the inordi-

nate appetite of that people who lothed the manna, and luſted after fleſh, by bringing innumerable quails from the ſea, and cauſing them to fall about their camp, he commanded Moſes to ſay unto the people, ‘ ſanctify yourſelves a-‘gainſt to morrow, and ye ſhall eat fleſh *. a third inſtance is that of the text. the Lord had brought his people to the borders of Canaan, and was now to give them the ſeiſin and poſſeſſion of that promiſed land: he was to divide the waters of Jordan before them; and thereby both facilitate their paſſage, and aſſure their poſſeſſion. ‘ hereby, ſaid ‘ Joſhua, ye ſhall know that the living ‘ God is among you, and that he will ‘ without fail drive out from before you ‘ the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and ‘ the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and ‘ the Girgaſhites, and the Amorites, and ‘ the Jebuſites. behold, the ark of the ‘ covenant of the Lord of all the earth, ‘ paſſeth over before you into Jordan. ‘ and it ſhall come to paſs, as ſoon as ‘ the ſoles of the feet of the prieſts that

* Num. xi. 18.

'bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of 'all the earth, ſhall reſt in the waters 'of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan 'ſhall be cut off from the waters that 'come down from above: and they 'ſhall ſtand upon an heap.' now, to diſpoſe them for ſo great a mercy, Joſhua gives them this advertiſement in the text, 'ſanctify yourſelves: for to-'morrow the Lord will do wonders a-'mong you.'

And ſure this ſame advertiſement muſt needs be very ſeaſonable to us, who are expecting that God will manifeſt himſelf to-morrow in this place, in a way no leſs glorious, and far more comfortable and advantageous, than any of thoſe we have mentioned unto you. we hope he will deſcend from the habitation of his glory, that he will rend the heavens, and come down into this houſe; not 'with fire, and blackneſs, 'and darkneſs, and tempeſt, and the 'ſound of a trumpet, and the voice of 'words, which they that heard, intreated 'that the word ſhould not be ſpoken un-'to them any more; becauſe they could

'not endure that which was command-'ed *:' but with the gentle and enliven-ing flames of love, with the refreshing beams of Divine light, with the still and quiet whisper of his Holy Spirit; which are only heard in calm and silent souls. he is coming to proclaim another law, a law of liberty and love; to enter into a new and better covenant with us, not according 'to that covenant which 'he made with the house of Israel, in 'the day when he took them by the 'hand to lead them out of Egypt:' but this is the covenant he maketh with us, 'that he will put his laws into our 'minds, and write them in our hearts: 'and he will be to us a God, and we 'shall be to him a people; that he will 'be merciful to our unrighteous-'ness, and remember our iniquities no 'more †.'

To morrow the Lord will give us flesh to eat; not the flesh of quails, and feathered fowls, to sustain this crazy and decaying frame; but *the flesh and blood*

* Heb. xii. 18. 19. 20.

† Heb. viii. 9. 10. 12.

of the Son of man; that fleſh which is meat indeed, and that blood which is drink indeed; which giveth life and everlaſting happineſs to the ſoul, and conſigneth theſe mortal bodies to a bleſſed reſurrection: 'for whoſo eateth my 'fleſh, and drinketh my blood,' (ſaith our Saviour), 'hath eternal life, and 'I will raiſe him up at the laſt day *.'

To-morrow the Lord will open a paſſage for his people towards the heavenly Canaan, place them, as it were, in the confines of that promiſed land, in the ſuburbs of happineſs and glory: at leaſt he will ſhew them a token for good, and ſign a right and ſecurity unto it. and, though floods of ſin and ſorrow were ready to overwhelm their ſouls, he will reſtrain and divert them: 'ſurely in the floods of great waters, 'they ſhall not come nigh unto them †.' what fitter terms could we therefore chuſe to beſpeak you in, than thoſe of this holy man, 'ſanctify yourſelves: 'for to morrow, &c.'

The words contain an exhortation,

* John. vi. 54. † Pſal. xxxii. 6.

and a reaſon inforcing it. in applying them to the preſent occaſion, we ſhall invert the order, and handle the latter part of the text firſt, becauſe of the influence it hath on the former. we ſhall firſt tell you what thoſe wonders are which the Lord is to do among us tomorrow; the conſideration of them being of great uſe, both to excite us to ſanctify and prepare ourſelves, and alſo to inſtruct and direct us in it.

I. What then are thoſe wonders we expect to ſee? a little bread broken and divided among us, a little wine poured forth and drunk. is there any thing to ſurpriſe or amaze us here? what better is this than our ordinary entertainment at home? 'are not Abana and Pharpar, 'rivers of Damaſcus, better than all the 'waters of Iſrael ‡?' ſuch may be the thoughts of profane and ignorant fools; for the outſide of this ordinance is very poor and mean, hath nothing in it that may dazzle or delight the vulgar eye, that may pleaſe or affect a carnal mind: but thoſe whoſe eyes are opened to

‡ 2 Kings v. 12.

right apprehenſions of ſpiritual and Divine things, can eaſily ſee through this coarſe and contemptible vail, and diſcern aſtoniſhing wonders in this ordinance, wonders of power, and wiſdom, and love.

If we conſider what is repreſented to us in this ſacrament, we have therein occaſion to behold the moſt wonderful and aſtoniſhing ſpectacle that ever was ſeen in this lower world; the only begotten Son of God ſuffering for the ſins of the world; the Lord of glory hanging betwixt two thieves: for in this ordinance 'Jeſus Chriſt is evidently ſet 'forth as crucified before our eyes *.' we may read and hear of it at other times; but this is a more clear and ſolemn repreſentation of it: our dying Lord commanded us to *do it in remembrance of him.* here our thoughts are more fixed, and our meditations higher raiſed; we get a nearer and more advantageous proſpect. and our faith comes not only by the ear; our other ſenſes contribute unto it, that we

* Gal. iii. 1.

may ſay in ſome ſenſe, with the beloved diſciple, that we have not only heard, but 'have ſeen with our eyes, we have 'looked upon it, and our hands have 'handled the Word of life †.' 'tis true, there might have been contrived a more ſenſible reſemblance, and tragical repreſentation of the death of Chriſt. that ſpectacle repreſented upon the ſcene, would perhaps affect our ſenſes and fancy more, and might ſooner draw tears from our eyes, and occaſion ſome warm and affectionate paſſion. but it is a mean and low devotion that is ſeated in the inferior faculties of the ſoul, which outward objects do excite by their natural ſtrength, without the exerciſe of the ſoul's conſidering and meditating powers. and therefore (as one hath well obſerved) "the repreſentation "of Chriſt's death in the ſacrament is "ſo ordered, that it might both help the "ſoul, and leave it ſomething to do in "forming its own apprehenſions and "reſentment." in it we ſee ſo much as to awaken our ſouls, but not ſo much

† 1 John i. 1.

as to keep them awake without themſelves. the outward object ſerves to excite our faith; but then leaves it to its proper exerciſe and employment. faith takes the hint which ſenſe doth give it, and in the ſacramental bread and wine can behold the blood and wounds of our bleſſed Saviour. it placeth us, as it were, at the foot of his croſs, and makes us obſerve the whole tranſaction. and thus, that holy ordinance we are to celebrate, preſents to our view the wonderful redemption of mankind, which ſhall be the admiration of men and angels to all eternity: ſo that, if there were not more, on this account we might ſay in ſome ſenſe, 'to-morrow the Lord will do 'wonders among you.'

But this is not all. this ſacrament doth not only repreſent a wonder that is already paſt, but exhibits one anew. the bread and wine that we receive, are not bare and empty ſigns, to put us in mind of the death and ſufferings of Chriſt. our Saviour calls them *his body and blood;* and ſuch, without queſtion, they are to all ſpiritual purpoſes and

advantages. we are not obliged to believe, that, after conſecration, the bread and wine do vaniſh, and the body and blood of Chriſt ſucceed in their room: our ſenſe and reaſon do aſſure us of the contrary, the ſcripture doth no where affirm it, nor did ever the ancient church believe it: nor is it poſſible to conceive the uſe or benefit of this ſtrange and unintelligible change. 'it is the ſpirit that 'quickeneth, the fleſh profiteth no-'thing *.' theſe words of our Saviour, *are ſpirit and life*, are to be underſtood in a vital and ſpiritual ſenſe. but though theſe elements be not changed in their nature and ſubſtance, yet they undergo a mighty change as to their efficacy and uſe; and that food which could before but yield a little refreſhment to the body, is now become a mean to nouriſh and ſtrengthen the ſoul, an inſtrument to convey unto us all thoſe bleſſings that the body and blood of our Saviour can afford us.

As under the law a part of ſome ſacrifices was burnt on the altar, and a

* John vi. 63.

part was eaten by thoſe for whom they were offered; ſo our bleſſed Saviour, having offered up himſelf on the altar of the croſs, as a propitiation for the ſins of men, did ſubſtitute theſe holy ſymbols in place of his body and blood, that we, by feaſting on them, might get an intereſt in that ſacrifice, and be partakers of the atonement that was made, and the pardon that was purchaſed by him.

Again, in this ſacrament, Chriſt doth convey himſelf into the ſouls of men, and taketh ſtronger poſſeſſion of them. as after the ſop Satan entered into Judas, ſo with theſe holy elements Chriſt entereth into the hearts of his people, becomes the food and nouriſhment of their ſouls: he diffuſeth himſelf through all their faculties, and animates them with his life and ſpirit; that they may have no will or affections of their own, no deſires or inclinations different from his; but that every pulſe may anſwer the motions of his heart, and all their powers be actuated and enlivened by his ſpirit; in a word, that it may not be any more

they, *but Chriſt that liveth in them* *. thus are we fed and nouriſhed by the body and blood of Chriſt, while the power of the Godhead doth diffuſe its virtue and operation into the human nature, to the enlivening the hearts of thoſe who do rightly receive theſe ſacramental pledges.

And thus I hope you ſee what wonders the Lord is to do among us. it was a ſignal miracle he wrought at the feaſt, when he turned water into wine; but ſure it is a greater and more important one, to turn bread and wine into his body and blood, in that ſenſe we have been explaining. it was a great matter, to feed a multitude with a few loaves and ſmall fiſhes; but a greater it is, to make a little bread and wine become the mean of nouriſhment to ſo many ſouls. and, were our eyes opened to the diſcerning of ſpiritual things, we ſhould ſee greater wonders wrought, and more gracious miracles performed, by the body and blood of our Saviour, than thoſe which were done

* Gal. ii. 20.

by the touch of his ſacred body while he lived here among men. I ſhall conclude this point in the words of St. Chryſoſtom, only deſiring they may be underſtood according to what hath been already ſaid, making ſome allowance for the rhetorical and hyberbolick ſtyle, Οταν ἰδῇς τὸν Κυριὸν τεθυμένον, &c. 'When 'thou doſt behold the Lord of glory of-'fered up, and the Prieſt performing 'the ſacrifice, and the people round 'about, dyed and made red with that 'precious blood, where, I pray thee, 'doſt thou conceive thyſelf to be? canſt 'thou think thou art yet upon earth, and 'converſing amongſt mortal creatures; 'or art thou not rather on a ſudden 'tranſported into heaven? doſt thou not 'loſe all thoughts of the body, and 'with a pure mind, and naked ſoul, 'behold the things that are done above?' O the wonderful mercy and goodneſs of God! he who ſitteth with the Father above, is at the ſame time preſent here below, and gives himſelf to all who will receive and embrace him.—compare this, if you will, with another miracle.

imagine you ſee the great Elias with an infinite number of people about him, the ſacrifice laid upon the ſtones, and all the reſt quiet and ſilent, while the Prophet poureth forth his prayers, then the fire coming down on a ſudden from heaven, and conſuming the ſacrifice. truly theſe things are ſtrange, and full of wonder; but yet are far inferior to our ſacred and tremendous myſteries. for here the Prieſt doth not bring fire, but the holy Ghoſt; he prayeth not that a flame may deſcend from heaven to conſume the holy things before him, but that the Divine grace, influencing the ſacrifice, may thereby inflame the hearts and ſouls of all the people, and render them more pure than ſilver tried in the fire. doubtleſs, when theſe ſacred and venerable myſteries are performing, the holy angels do ſtand by, and the place is full of bleſſed and glorious ſpirits, who delight to look and pry into them; and all the orders of the heavenly hoſt ſhout, and raiſe their voice together.

[*The reſt is wanting.*]

OF THE IMPORTANCE AND DIFFICULTY OF THE MINISTERIAL FUNCTION.

Preached before the SYNOD of ABERDEEN.

2 COR. ii. 16.

Who is sufficient for these things?

REVEREND and dearly beloved men, brethren, and fathers, It is one of the advantages of that peace and tranquillity wherewith Almighty God is pleased to bless this poor church, that the officers of it have liberty of assembling together on these occasions, for mutual counsel and assistance in the exercise of their holy function. and indeed, if there were no matter of publick deliberation, yet ought we gladly to embrace the opportunity of seeing one another's faces, not only that we may maintain and express a brotherly correspondence and affection, but also that we may animate and excite one another unto greater measures of diligence and zeal;

as coals, being gathered together, do mutually receive and propagate ſome new degrees of vigour and heat. this I have always looked upon as none of the meaneſt advantages of theſe ſynodical meetings; and ſhall think myſelf very happy, if my poor endeavours, in the performance of this preſent duty, may, by the Divine bleſſing, contribute any thing towards this excellent and deſirable purpoſe. to this end I have made choice of a text, which I hope may afford us ſome uſeful meditations for ſtirring up, and awakening in our ſouls a deeper ſenſe of thoſe great engagements under which we lie.

The bleſſed Apoſtle, in the former verſe, and beginning of this, has been ſpeaking of the different ſucceſs the goſpel did meet with among thoſe to whom it was preached; that it was not like thoſe weak and harmleſs medicines, which, if they do no good, are ſure to do no hurt; but like ſome perfumes which are comfortable and ſtrengthening to the wholſome, but troubleſome and noxious to the weak. ſo doth it prove

a vital ſavour to thoſe who receive and obey it, but a moſt deadly poiſon to all who reject and deſpiſe it: for 'we 'are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt, 'to them that are ſaved, and in them 'that periſh; to the one we are a ſavour 'of death unto death, and to the other 'a ſavour of life unto life.' and then he takes occaſion to conſider what a great matter it is to be employed in thoſe adminiſtrations wherein the happineſs and miſery of mankind is ſo nearly concerned, Καὶ τίς πρὸς ταῦτα, &c. and 'Who is ſufficient for theſe 'things?'

We ſhall not detain you with an explication of the words. two things I conceive are implied in them: 1. the importance; 2. the difficulty of the Miniſterial function. for if a buſineſs be of ſmall concern, it is little matter who have the management of it; there is no great harm done if it miſcarry; any body is ſufficient for that thing. on the other hand, let the matter be never ſo weighty, if there be no difficulty in it, there needs no extraordinary endow-

ments in thoſe to whom it is committed: common prudence, and a little care, will ſuffice; there is no likelihood that it can miſcarry. but the work of the miniſtry is at once ſo important and ſo difficult, of ſo great conſequence and ſo hard to be performed, that there is a great deal of reaſon for an emphatick interrogation, 'Who is ſufficient 'for theſe things?'

I. Firſt, let us fix our thoughts a while on the weight and importance of the miniſtry, and we ſhall find that it is a greater burden lying on our ſhoulders, than if the greateſt affairs of this world were devolved upon us, and we did hold up the pillars of the earth. this will appear, whether we conſider the relation we ſtand in to the Almighty God, or the charge of the flocks we have committed to us.

To begin with the firſt. that infinite Majeſty which created, and doth continually uphold the earth, and all things in it *, as the juſt owner and lord of the whole creation, (for all are his ſervants,

* Pſal. xxiv. 1. 2.

and muſt obey his will), is yet pleaſed to claim a ſpecial property in ſome things which he chuſeth for himſelf, and employeth for peculiar deſigns: 'nevertheleſs of old did he chuſe a houſe 'for himſelf, and a place to be called by 'his name. at Salem was his tabernacle, 'and his dwelling-place in Zion †. the 'Lord loved the gates of Zion more 'than all the dwellings of Jacob.' and the church in all ages hath thought it fit, to ſeparate ſome places from vulgar and common uſe, and to appropriate them to the ſervice of God. again, though all times and ſeaſons belong unto God, yet hath he ſet apart a day for his worſhip, and ſanctified a ſabbath for himſelf. all men are created for the honour of God, and are infinitely obliged to ſerve him; yet, becauſe the greateſt part of mankind are too much engaged in worldly affairs, and have their ſouls fettered in the diſtracting cares of this life, and almoſt buried in their bodies, it hath pleaſed the Divine wiſdom, to call forth a ſelect number

† Pſal. lxxvi. 2.

of men, who, being delivered from thoſe intanglements, and having their minds more highly purified, and more peculiarly fitted for the offices of religion, may attend continually on that very thing. religion is every man's general calling, but it is our particular calling too. and while the labourer is at his plough, the craftſman at his forge, and the merchant in his ſhop, the miniſter ought to be employed in the exerciſe of devotion, for the advancing the intereſt of piety, and the honour of our Maker. my beloved, ye are deputed, as it were, by the whole creation, at leaſt by the inferior world, to preſent their homage and ſervice to God, and to praiſe him for all his works. ye ought to maintain a correſpondence betwixt heaven and earth, to deprecate the wrath of God, and avert his vengeance and plagues from mankind. your buſineſs is the ſame with that of the holy angels: you dwell in the houſe of God, and ſhould be continually praiſing him. and this is an employment ſo holy, that, were our ſouls as pure as cherubs, as

zealous and active as the bleſſed ſpirits that are above, we ſhould yet have reaſon to cover our faces, and to be ſwallowed up in a deep ſenſe of our own inſufficiency for theſe things. and what is ſinful duſt and aſhes, that he ſhould ſtand in ſo near a relation unto the Lord of glory! what is man, O bleſſed God, that thou ſhouldſt chuſe him, and cauſe him to approach unto thee! 'that 'he ſhould dwell in thy courts, and be 'ſatisfied with the goodneſs of thy houſe, 'even of thine holy temple *!' the prieſthood under the law was a very ſacred and venerable thing, and no profane hand might intermeddle with the meaneſt offices that belonged unto it. all the zeal and ſeemingly religious care that Uzzah had for the tottering ark, ſerved not to excuſe his preſumption, when he intruded upon the Levitical function. but, certainly, as the goſpel-miniſtry is ſo much more excellent and ſublime, being intruſted with the adminiſtration of thoſe holy myſteries which were but ſhadowed in the former; how pure and

* Pſal. lxv. 4.

holy ought thoſe lips to be, by which God ſpeaketh unto his people, and by which they ſpeak unto him; which ſometimes pronounce thoſe powerful and effectual ſentences of abſolution and excommunication, that are ſo ſurely ratified in heaven; and thoſe hands which are employed in the laver of regeneration, and to handle the bread of life! *Hi ſunt*, (ſaith holy Chryſoſtom, *de ſacerd. lib.* 3.) *quibus*, &c. "theſe are "the men that aſſiſt at the pangs of the "new birth, and to whom baptiſmal "regeneration is committed; by theſe "we put on Chriſt, and are buried with "the Son of God, and ſo become mem-"bers of that bleſſed head. upon which "account the ſacerdotal function is "more creditable than that of kings "and princes; and we owe more ho-"nour unto prieſts than unto parents "themſelves: for they have begotten us "of blood, and of the will of the fleſh; "but theſe are the authors of that na-"tivity which we have from God; that "adoption, whereby, through grace, "we become the children of the Moſt

High." and, again, the ſame father, ſpeaking of the ſacerdotal power, expreſſes it in theſe terms: 'Qui terram 'incolunt, atque in ea verſantur, his 'commiſſum eſt, ut ea quae in coelis 'ſunt diſpenſent, &c.' "men that live "on earth, do diſpenſe the things that "are in heaven; and are intruſted with "a power that neither angels nor arch-"angels can pretend unto: for to "none of theſe was it ſaid, *What ye bind on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven.* "earthly princes have the power of "binding, but it is only the bodies of "men. theſe bands that I ſpeak of take "hold of the ſouls of men, and reach "unto the very heavens: ſo that God "doth ratify above, what the prieſt "determines below; and his ſervants "decrees are ratified by their Lord. the "Father hath given all judgment to the "Son; but now, it ſeems, the Son does "deliver it to the paſtors of the church. "and ſo eminent is this authority, "that one would think the perſons "inveſted with it muſt needs be raiſed "above the common condition of men,

" and exempted from human affections,
" and, as it were, already placed in
" heaven " thus far this holy father.
nor can I pass by what he says of that
ineffable privilege of the celebration
of the holy sacrament, though some of
his expressions, being figurative and
hyperbolical, have been abused by the
Romish party : *Dum conspicis Dominum
in immolatione, et sacerdotem sacrificio
incumbentem*, &c. " when thou dost
" behold the Lord of glory offered up,
" and the priest performing the sacri-
" fice, and the people round about dy-
" ed, as it were, and made red with that
" precious blood ; where, I pray thee,
" dost thou conceive thyself to be ?
" dost thou think thou art on earth, and
" conversing among mortal creatures ;
" or art thou not rather on a sudden
" transported into heaven ? dost thou
" not lose all thoughts of the body, and
" material things, and with a pure
" mind, and naked soul, behold the
" things that are done in those regions
" above ? and when the Minister has
" invoked the Divine Spirit, and per-

" formed thoſe reverend and dreadful " myſteries, and holdeth the Lord of " all things in his hand, tell me, I be- " ſeech you, in what order of things we " are to place him? what uprightneſs, " what purity is required of him! what " hands ſhould they be that adminiſter " thoſe things! what lips that utter and " pronounce thoſe words! for at that " time the holy angels ſtand by the " prieſt; the place is full of bleſſed ſpi- " rits, who deſire to look into thoſe " things; and all the orders of the " heavenly hoſt do ſhout, and raiſe " their voice together, as we may eaſi- " ly believe, if we conſider the work " that is then in hand." I cannot ſtand to relate all that this excellent perſon ſpeaketh to the ſame purpoſe, but ſhall proceed to the next thing we propoſed,

The weight and importance of the Miniſterial function, conſidered in relation to the people committed to our charge. we are not intruſted with their fortune and eſtate, nor with their bodily health and welfare, nor with the af-

fairs of ſtate, or the intereſt of kingdoms; though indeed religion hath no ſmall influence on theſe, and the labours of Miniſters (if ſucceſsful) would contribute exceedingly to the public tranquillity, and the preſent felicity of men. but our main buſineſs lieth another way. we have to do with rational and immortal ſouls, thoſe moſt noble and divine ſubſtances which proceeded from God, and are capable of being united to him eternally, but withal in hazard of being eternally ſeparated from him; theſe ἀμφισβήτημαλα τῦ Θεῦ ϗ δαίμονων, as Syneſius calls them, 'theſe ſtakes between 'God and the devil:' and on us it doth in ſome meaſure depend to whoſe ſhare they ſhall fall, whether they ſhall be angels or fiends. we may ſay with reaſon of our work, what the painter did vainly boaſt of, *Laboramus aeternitati:* the impreſſes we make ſhall laſt for ever. my beloved, the moſt ſerious of our thoughts come very far ſhort of the ineſtimable worth of the *depoſitum*, that treaſure which is committed to our care. he who did create and redeem the ſouls

of men, doth beſt underſtand their value; and we ſee what eſteem he putteth upon them by the pains he is pleaſed to take about them. their ſalvation was contrived before the mountains were brought forth, before the foundation of the earth was laid; the deſign was formed from all eternity; and glorious are the methods by which it is accompliſhed. 'huc magiſtra lex tendit; huc, inter Chriſtum et legem interjecti, prophetae,' ſaith St. Greg. Naz. "at this both the law and the "prophets did aim." *huc exinanita Deitas; huc aſſumpta caro; huc nova illa mixtio.* "to this purpoſe did the "Deity empty itſelf, and was clothed "with the human nature; to this pur-"poſe was that ſtrange and wonderful "conjunction, God and man united "together." hitherto did all the actions and all the ſufferings of our bleſſed Saviour aim; for this he was born, and for this he did die. and ſhall we undervalue the price of his blood, or think it a ſmall matter to have the charge of thoſe for whom it was ſhed? it is the

church of God we muſt overſee and feed; that church for which the world is upheld, which is ſanctified by the holy Ghoſt, on which the angels themſelves do attend. what a weighty charge is this we have undertaken? 'who is ſuf-'ficient for theſe things?'

That theſe matters may yet take the deeper impreſſion on your hearts, let us farther conſider the dreadful conſequences of miſcarriage in the diſcharge of the Miniſterial function; and we ſhall find that it reflects a great deal of diſhonour on the Divine Majeſty, and on our bleſſed Saviour; that it doth very much hazard the ſouls of our people, and certainly ruin our own. I ſay, it doth reflect diſhonour on Almighty God, as the faults of ſervants do commonly prejudice the reputation of their maſters, and the failings of ambaſſadors are imputed to their princes. we ſtand in a nearer relation to God, and are ſuppoſed to be beſt acquainted with his will, and to carry the deepeſt impreſſions of his nature on our minds. and ignorant people will entertain the meaner

thoughts of the holineſs of God, when they miſs it in thoſe who are called his ſervants. certainly it is no ſmall reproach which the faults or miſcarriages of Miniſters do bring upon the ways of godlineſs, and the holy religion we profeſs. it is no ſmall affront that is hereby put on the bleſſed author of it; greater, without queſtion, than all the malice and ſpite of his open enemies is able to practiſe: for hereby he is crucified afreſh, and put unto open ſhame. and O how great is the hazard our poor people do run by our negligence or failings, even as much as the worth of their ſouls amounteth to! if the watchmen be not faithful, and give not timely warning, the ſword will readily come, and the people be taken away in their ſins. 'cauſa ſunt ruinae populi ſacer-'dotes mali.' like people, like prieſts, will ſtill be a proverb of a general truth. but, if the negligence and miſcarriage of a Miniſter doth hazard the ſouls of others, it doth certainly ruin his own; which made St. Chryſoſtom ſay, 'equi-'dem ex eccleſiae miniſtris non arbitror

'multos ſervari;' words ſo terrible, that I tremble to put them into Engliſh: and yet, if a man ſhould ſpeak fire, blood, and ſmoke, if flames could come out of his mouth inſtead of words, if he had a voice like thunder, and an eye like lightning, he could not ſufficiently repreſent the dreadful account that an unfaithful paſtor ſhall make. what horror and confuſion ſhall it caſt them into at the laſt day, to hear the blood of the Son of God plead againſt them; to hear our great Maſter ſay, It was the purchaſe of my blood which ye did neglect; God died for theſe ſouls, of whom ye took ſo little pains: think not therefore to be ſaved by that blood which ye have deſpiſed, or to eſcape the torments whereunto many others are plunged through your faults! by this time I hope it doth appear, that the work of the Miniſtry is of great weight and importance; that much doth depend on the right diſcharging of it; and that miſcarrying in it is the moſt dangerous thing in the world.

II. The ſecond thing we had to

ſpeak to, is the difficulty of managing this charge aright. and this will appear if we conſider; 1. the end and deſign of the Miniſterial function; 2. the impediments we have to overcome in the proſecution of that end; and, 3. the ſeveral ſorts of duties and exerciſes incumbent upon us. as for the firſt, the great buſineſs of our calling is, to advance the Divine life in the world; to make religion ſway and prevail; frame and mould the ſouls of men into a conformity to God, and ſuperinduce the beautiful lineaments of his bleſſed image upon them; to enlighten their underſtandings, and inform their judgments, rectify their wills, and order their paſſions, and ſanctify all their affections. the world lieth in ſin; and it is our work to awaken men out of that deadly ſleep, to reſcue them out of that diſmal condition. we are the inſtruments of God for effectuating theſe great deſigns: and, though we be not accountable for the ſucceſs, when we have done what lieth in our power, yet nothing below this ſhould be our aim;

and we ſhould never ceaſe our endeavours, until that gracious change be wrought in every perſon committed to our charge. and, if any think this an eaſy work, let them pitch on ſome perſon of their acquaintance, whom they know to be addicted to ſome one particular vice, and try whether it be eaſy to reclaim him. perſuade the drunkard, if you can, to forſake his cups; the covetous wretch, to part with his money; reaſon but the wild gallant into ſerious thoughts, and a grave and ſober deportment; try to purge your neighbourhood of groſs crimes, and ſcandalous vices; and perſuade thoſe that live about you to live at leaſt as becomes men. in this you have the advantage of dealing with that ſelf-love which does prevail in them. you may eaſily convince them, that the practice of theſe virtues you recommend, would contribute much to their temporal felicity, to thoſe intereſts of pleaſure, advantage, and honour, to which they have the greateſt regard; and yet you ſhall find even this task not eaſy to be

performed. but to raiſe men unto the greateſt heights of mortification and ſelf-denial; to make them truly humble, meek, and reſigned to the will of God; to overpower that ſelfiſh principle which is ſo deeply rooted in the conſtitution of our ſouls, and doth ſo readily inſinuate itſelf into all our affections and deſigns; to ſet Divine love and univerſal charity upon the throne, that the honour of God, and the welfare of others, may be as dear unto men, as their own concerns; to have religion become another nature unto them, and they, as it were, a living law unto themſelves: this, this is ſo great and wonderful a change, that, as only Omnipotence is able to produce it, ſo certainly they have a mighty task who are employed as inſtruments in it.

Again, let me appeal to the conſcience and experience of every one, what difficulty they find in dealing with their own ſouls, in regulating their own paſſions, and in mortifying their own corrupt affections. yet here we have the

advantage of a nearer application: we can carry home our reaſons with more force upon ourſelves than others; our thoughts and meditations muſt be more clear and lively than our words and expreſſions are. if it be hard then to perſuade ourſelves to be good, it is ſure much harder to perſuade others to be ſo.

Conſider, in the next place, the enemies we have to encounter with, which oppoſe the deſign of our employments. 'we wreſtle not againſt fleſh and 'blood, but againſt principalities and 'powers.' all the forces of hell are up in arms againſt us, all the powers of darkneſs do continually oppoſe us; and little do we know thoſe hidden arts whereby theſe accurſed ſpirits do apply themſelves to the ſouls of men, to ſuggeſt and inſinuate their temptations. the world alſo, with all its cares and pleaſures, is daily fighting againſt us; and there is no eſtate or condition in it, but what is ſurrounded with a thouſand temptations. the poor are ſo much taken up in providing for the neceſſities

of this life, that they can hardly be perſuaded to think upon another. the rich are commonly drowned in ſenſual pleaſures; and our Saviour tells us, 'it is 'eaſier for a camel to go through the eye 'of a needle, than for a rich man to en-'ter into the kingdom of heaven.' the influence of ſenſual objects is very ſtrong. and though the poſſeſſions of the other world be as far beyond our enjoyments here, as this world is above nothing; yet, becauſe the things of this world are preſent, and are ever and anon offering themſelves unto us, and beating upon our ſenſes, therefore they do too frequently prevail againſt all the perſuaſions of reaſon and religion too. and what ſhall we ſay of the evil company and bad example that inveigles the ſouls of men? we perhaps ſee them once a week, and bring them to ſome degree of ſobriety, and a ſound mind; but then their wicked neighbours, and the companions of their ſin, do meet them every day, and, by their counſel and example, obliterate any good impreſſion that has been made upon them: and hereby we

loſe more in a week, than we are able to recover in a whole year. but the greateſt enemies we have, are thoſe within the ſouls of men; their depraved affections, their luſts and corrupt inclinations. when phyſicians undertake the cure of bodily diſtempers, they have the conſent of the party; he is ready to comply with their preſcriptions. but our greateſt difficulty is in dealing with the wills of men, and making them conſent to be cured. they hug the diſeaſe, and ſhun the medicine as poiſon, and have no deſire to be well. hence it is they do all they can to keep us ſtrangers to their ſouls, and take as much pains to conceal their inward diſtempers, as they ought to do in revealing them. we have juſtly ſhaken off the tyranny of the Romiſh confeſſion. but, alas! our people go too far in the other extreme; and, becauſe they are not obliged to tell every thing to their paſtors, in effect they acquaint them with nothing at all. perhaps ſome perſons, lying under ſome terrors and trouble of mind, may apply themſelves

unto us, to give vent to the fire that burneth within them; but otherwiſe they content themſelves to ſee us in the pulpit, and care not how little we be acquainted with their temper and way. it will be long ere any come to tell us, that they find themſelves proud, or paſſionate, or revengeful, and inquire how they ſhall get theſe vices ſubdued; that they are covetous and uncharitable, and beſeech us to tell them how they ſhall amend; to acquaint us with their temptations, and to learn the fitteſt methods to oppoſe them. we are ſeldom troubled with addreſſes of this nature; and it is hard to do any thing towards a cure, when they will not let us know the diſeaſe.

The difficulty of the Miniſterial function will further appear, if we will conſider the ſeveral duties and exerciſes of it. we ſhall but touch at ſome of them at preſent, and may perhaps have occaſion to ſpeak more in the application.

Catechiſing is a neceſſary, but painful one. it is no ſmall toil, to tell the ſame

things a thouſand times to ſome dull and ignorant people, who perhaps ſhall know but little when we have done. it is this laborious exerciſe that does ſometimes tempt a Miniſter to envy the condition of thoſe who gain their living by the ſweat of their brows, without the toil and diſtraction of their ſpirits.

Preaching is an exerciſe that many are ambitious of, and none more than thoſe that are leaſt qualified for it; and, it is probable, the deſire of this liberty is no ſmall temptation to ſome of our giddy people to go over to that ſect and party, where all ranks, and both ſexes, are allowed the ſatisfaction to hear themſelves talk in publick. but it is not ſo eaſy a matter to perform this task aright; to ſtand in the preſence of God, and to ſpeak to his people in his name, with that plainneſs and ſimplicity, that ſeriouſneſs and gravity, that zeal and concern, which the buſineſs requires; to accommodate ourſelves to the capacity of the common people, without diſguſting our more knowing hearers by the inſipid flatneſs of our

diſcourſe; to excite and awaken drowſy ſouls, without terrifying and diſturbing more tender conſciences; to bear home the convictions of ſin, without the appearance of ſome perſonal reflexion; in a word, to approve ourſelves unto God 'as workmen that need not 'be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word 'of truth *.'

Diſcipline is an edged tool; and they had need be no fools that meddle with it: it is a hard thing, to manage the proceſſes of the cenſures of the church with ſuch care and prudence, that may neither encourage flagitious perſons by our remiſſneſs, nor tempt to irritate others by needleſs ſeverity, nor give advantage to captious and troubleſome men for want of ſome legal formality.

But certainly the greateſt and moſt difficult work of a Miniſter, is in applying himſelf particularly to the ſeveral perſons under his charge; to acquaint himſelf with their behaviour, and the temper of their ſouls; to redreſs what

* 2 Tim. ii. 15.

is amiſs, and prevent their future miſcarriages. without this private work, his other endeavours will do little good. and, conſidering the great variety that is among the humours and diſpoſitions of men, (equal almoſt to that of their faces), this muſt needs be an infinite labour. 'tis the art of arts, (ſaith Gregory Nazianzen in his Apologetick Oration), and the moſt difficult of all ſciences, to govern ſuch a manifold and various creature as man. and another Gregory hath written a whole tractate 'of the 'diverſity there is amongſt mens tem-'pers, and the ſeveral ways of dealing 'with them.' what a martyrdom is it for ſome modeſt and baſhful tempers, when they find themſelves obliged to uſe freedom and ſeverity in reproving the faults of thoſe who, in quality or age, are above themſelves! and O what a hard matter it is to deal with people that are ready to leave the world, and ſtep in upon eternity; when their ſouls do, as it were, hang on their lips, and they have one foot (as we uſe to ſay) already in the grave! the Miniſter

is ſeldom ſent for till the phyſician has given the patient over; and then they beg him to dreſs their ſouls for heaven, when their winding-ſheet is preparing, and their friends are almoſt ready to dreſs the body for the funeral. now, though ſome of theſe have lived well, and, like the wiſe virgins, have oil in their lamps; yet it is a great matter to calm them, and to diſpoſe their ſouls for that great change they are preſently to undergo. but, alas! it fares otherways with the greateſt part. they are yet ſtrangers to the ways of religion, the work of their ſalvation is yet to begin; and their luſts to be mortified, their corruptions ſubdued, the whole frame of their ſouls to be changed: and though they have ſcarce ſo much ſtrength as to turn them on their beds, yet their warfare againſt principalities, powers, and ſpiritual wickedneſs is but newly commenced; their work is great, their diſadvantages many, and the time very ſhort that is before them. perhaps they are dull and inſenſible, and we ſhall hardly perſuade them of their danger.

they will acknowledge they are ſinners, and ſo are all others as well as they: they truſt in the mercies of Chriſt, and have confidence enough of their ſalvation; and cannot be perſuaded they want any thing that is neceſſary for the ſame. others of theſe, again, are ſeized with fear, and call for the Miniſter to comfort them. what ſhall he do? ſhall he tell them that all their terrors are juſt, and it is now too late to repent? I know ſome divines are peremptory in this caſe, and think they ſhould be left in deſpair. but, ſure, it were a ſad employment for a Miniſter, to go to viſit a dying man, only to tell him he is damned; and withal it is too great boldneſs in us, to limit the grace and mercy of God. true and ſincere repentance will never come too late; but certainly a death-bed-repentance is ſeldom ſincere: and it is hard either for the Miniſter, or the man himſelf, to tell, whether it be only the fear of hell, or a true and godly ſorrow that he feeleth in his ſoul. all that a Miniſter can do, is, to preſs him to all poſſible ſerioufneſs, and to re-

ſign himſelf to God for the event; or to lay before him in general, the terms and conditions of the goſpel-covenant: the application will be hard and uncertain.

Theſe, and many more, are the difficulties of the Miniſterial function. it was not without a great deal of reaſon that one of the fathers did call it, *Onus angelicis humeris formidandum:* "a "weight under which angels ſhoulders "might ſhrink." hence it was that the holy men of old have been ſo mightily afraid to undertake it. Jeremiah, who was ſanctified from the womb, and ordained a Prophet to the nations, when he received his commiſſion, he cried out, 'Ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot ſpeak, 'for I am a child *.' and Ezekiel, though ſtrengthened and confirmed by God, yet went unwillingly; yea, 'in the 'bitterneſs and indignation of his ſpirit' †. and, in the ancient church, the more eminent and great perſons were in piety and worth, the more ſenſible they were of the greatneſs of this charge, and the more loth to engage in it. ſome of them

* Jer. i. 6. † Ezek. iii. 14.

have fled into the mountains and deſarts, or hid themſelves in the dens and caverns of the earth; and were more afraid to be laid hands on by the Biſhop, than by the moſt bloody perſecutors. three times did Ambroſe flee from Milan; and it is reported, that after he had travelled hard all night, he found himſelf next morning at the outer-gate of that city he endeavoured to avoid. Gregory Nazianzen, being taken in his flight, and ordained by force, did compoſe that excellent oration which is at the beginning of his works; wherein he doth ſo well expreſs the greatneſs and the danger of the miniſtry, that the reading of it (and I wiſh it were frequently and attentively read) might, I think, do much to quell the confidence of the moſt confident intruders. Auguſtine entered by chance into the church of Hippo, juſt as the Biſhop Valerius was ſpeaking to the people concerning the choice of a miniſter, of whom they ſtood in great need. he was preſently pitched upon, and almoſt ordained by force, after he had, with

tears, deprecated the charge; and, in theſe ſtrange terms, *Quid! vultis ut peream?* intimating the hazard he ſhould thereby run. and Chryſoſtom profeſſeth of himſelf, that, when he was choſen to a biſhoprick, his ſoul and body were almoſt parted aſunder, ſo great was the grief and fear that ſeized upon his ſpirits; and that he did many times wonder how it had ever entered into the minds of thoſe that choſe him, or what great offence that church could have been guilty of, which had provoked God to ſuffer it to be committed to ſuch an unworthy perſon. ſo ſenſible were theſe excellent men of the difficulties of this holy function, even in thoſe firſt and golden ages of the church: and certainly they are much augmented to us, who live in theſe dregs of time, wherein religion is almoſt baniſhed out of the world, the principles of it called in queſtion by many pretenders to judgment and wit, and the practice not only neglected but derided; inſomuch that men are frighted from godlineſs by the contempt that lyeth upon

it: 'Mali esse coguntur, ne ridiculi 'fiant.' we have a world of wickedness to fight against; and *who is sufficient for these things?*

Thus, having prosecuted the importance of the text, it is time to make some application of it. and, first, I shall address myself to those of the laity who vouchsafe us their presence, that they may not think their time mis-spent in some hours attendance.

You see, dear people, what a weighty and difficult charge they have to whom your souls are committed. whence is it then that some of you account the Ministerial function the most useless employment in the commonwealth, and that which might be most easily spared? and that Ministers have easy lives, gaining their living by the *breath of their mouths*, as some of you are pleased to word it? whence is it that this holy calling comes to be so much despised, and that the names of Minister, Parson, or Priest, are become words of ignominy and contempt? and whatever advantages of birth and education a Minister may

have, yet his employment is thought enough to degrade him, and put him below every one that can pretend to the name of a Gentleman?

Again, how comes it that thoſe ſmall gleanings of the church's patrimony which ſacrilege and oppreſſion have left us, ſhould yet be envied, and looked upon with an evil eye? and that a clergy-man, who has ſpent his time and much of his fortune in the *ſchools of the Prophets*, to fit himſelf for that employment wherein he may be moſt beneficial to mankind, ſhould yet be maligned for a ſmall annuity during his life, which perhaps amounts not to the gains of the meaneſt tradeſman? and yet, if thoſe perſons had choſen another employment, had taken Galen or Juſtinian for their maſters, perhaps they would have had parts and abilities ſufficient to have advanced themſelves to wealth and honours, as well as others, and would not have been envied for it. my beloved, I account him not worthy of the name of a Miniſter of Chriſt who cannot patiently ſuffer injury, contempt,

and envy. but certainly it is no good part in the people, to put theſe upon them: it is a ſhrewd token that they have a ſmall regard to piety and religion, and that their own ſouls are the things about them for which they have the leaſt concern. learn, I beſeech you, dear Chriſtians, learn to take more rational meaſures of things. think how much you are indebted to the Divine goodneſs, which hath taken ſo great care of your everlaſting happineſs, as to ſet apart an order of men, whoſe buſineſs it ſhall be to promote and advance it. do all that ye can to encourage and aſſiſt them in their work; give them the encouragement of your conſtant attendance, and aſſiſt them; by helping to inſtruct thoſe children and ſervants who are under your ſeveral charges. apply yourſelves frequently to them for advice and direction, and be often putting up that important queſtion, 'what 'ſhall we do to be ſaved?' yield them that ſubmiſſion and obedience which is due unto them in the Lord. go not to church to ſit as judges, and cenſure the

ſermon when you return. if you be not pleaſed with it, your ignorance or indiſpoſition may be the cauſe, and modeſty ſhould oblige you to ſilence. if you be taken with what you have heard, ſpend not your time in talk about it; practice is the beſt way to commend it. beware of that ſpiritual pride and conceitedneſs, which makes 'the people 'to ſtrive with their prieſts *;' which the Prophet Hoſea notes as an heinous ſin. finally, to ſum up your duty in the Apoſtle's words, 'obey them that have 'the rule over you, and ſubmit your-'ſelves: for they watch for your ſouls, 'as they that muſt give account: that 'they may do it with joy, and not with 'grief: for that is unprofitable for you †.'

I might, in the next place, take an occaſion from what hath been ſaid, to preſs the great obligation that lieth on patrons of churches, to ſeek out, and to make choice of thoſe whom they judge to be beſt qualified for ſo high and weighty a charge; and might ſhew, that it is no ſmall guilt that he draws

* Hoſ. iv. 4. † Heb. xiii. 17.

upon himself, who presents a person to the care of souls, of whose prudence and fidelity it may be he hath so little confidence, that he durst not intrust him with the management of his fortune, or the tutory of his child; while perhaps others are overlooked, that might be capable to do much more service in the church, merely because they have not the good luck to be related or recommended to the patron, or because they have less money, or more conscience than to bargain for the living. but I forbear this; and shall crave liberty of this venerable auditory, to take this occasion of doing something that relates to my peculiar function ‡, in speaking a little to those *sons of the Prophets*, those *candidates* of *holy orders*, whose diligence and study aim at the *ministry*, and who are to be employed in the vineyard of God, when the present labourers shall be called off to receive their reward. you see, Sirs, what a dreadful and important charge it is to which

‡ Divinity-Professor in King's college in Aberdeen.

you aſpire. conſider, I beſeech you, what great pains are neceſſary to fit and qualify you for it. ordinary callings are not learned without a long apprenticeſhip, and will the art of governing ſouls be learned on a ſudden? it is not the knowledge of controverſy, or the gift of eloquence, much leſs a ſtrong voice and bold confidence, that will qualify you for it. the errors that abound among us, make it neceſſary indeed that you ſhould know how to deal with the adverſaries; for the Clergy are many times put to the paſs the Jews were at the building the ſecond temple; 'with 'one hand they muſt build the houſe of 'God, and with the other they muſt 'hold a weapon *:' yet certainly your greateſt work lies within, in purifying your minds, and learning that wiſdom which is neceſſary for ſouls. begin then, I pray you, and preach to your paſſions, and try what good you can do to your friends and neighbours. ſtudy that gravity and ſerioufneſs, that humility and ſelf-denial, that purity and mor-

* Neh. iv. 17.

tification, that becometh thoſe who may one day ſtand in ſo near a relation to God, and bear ſo eminent a charge in his church. be not too haſty and forward in ruſhing into publick; it is better you be drawn than run. Nazianzen complains of ſome in his time, who with profane hearts and unwaſhed hands did ruſh into the holy function, and, before they were fit to receive the ſacrament, would take upon them to celebrate it; and though they be not come unto the age of men, if they have learned ſome pious words, think themſelves fit to be overſeers of others: 'O 'praefecturam! O elatum animum! ſa- 'cer etiam à cunabulis Samuel! ſapien- 'tes et magiſtri ſumus!' this, I ſay, was the humour of ſome in his days; and I am afraid the caſe is not much better in ours. but if you be truly ſenſible of what you are to undertake, you would think no time too much to be ſpent in preparation for it.

It remains yet that I addreſs myſelf briefly to you, *my Reverend brethren, and Right Reverend fathers*. We have

been endeavouring to lay before you the importance and difficulty of your employment; and ye know them much better than we can tell you. but theſe things ought not to diſcourage you, or make you faint under the weight, but rather to animate and excite your care. as Alexander ſaid once of an eminent hazard he had encountered, 'that now he had met with a danger 'worthy his courage;' ſo may I ſay of your work, that it is a buſineſs worthy your zeal, and the love and affection which you owe unto your bleſſed Maſter. and indeed ye can give no greater teſtimony of it, than by a faithful and conſcientious diſcharge of the duties of your calling. if your work is great, your reward is infinitely greater; and you have Omnipotence engaged in your aſſiſtance. up and be doing, and the Lord ſhall be with you. only, let us be careful to maintain ſuch a deep and conſtant ſenſe of the engagements we lie under, as may awaken us unto the greateſt diligence and watchfulneſs both over ourſelves and others.

As for the particulars of your duty, I dare not take upon me to be an inſtructor, who have much more need to learn my own; yet, ſince I am not placed here to be altogether ſilent, I ſhall offer to you the Apoſtle's exhortation to Titus, chap. ii. 15. and take liberty to inſiſt a little upon the particulars of it: 'theſe things ſpeak and exhort, 'and rebuke with all authority. let no 'man deſpiſe thee. theſe things ſpeak:' here he pointeth at that which ought to be the matter of our doctrine and inſtruction. we are not to entertain our people with ſubtile ſpeculations, metaphyſical niceties, perplexed notions, 'and fooliſh queſtions, which ingender 'ſtrife *; but let us ſpeak the things 'which become ſound doctrine.' let us frequently inculcate the great and uncontroverted truths of our religion, and trouble our people no further with controverſy than neceſſity doth require. let us ſtudy to acquaint them with the tenor of the goſpel-covenant, and what they muſt do to be ſaved; to inform

* 2 Tim. ii. 23.

them of the particular duties they owe both to God and man: for the Apoſtle had before been ſpeaking of the duties to be recommended to every one according to their ſeveral capacities and relations. and indeed it were not amiſs, that, in catechizing, Miniſters would bring home the articles of faith by practical improvements, both teaching men their particular duties, and preſſing them to the performance. but it is not enough to ſpeak theſe things, to tell men what is incumbent upon them; we muſt beſides endeavour to excite and ſtir them up by the moſt powerful and effectual perſuaſions: the judgment being informed, we muſt do all to influence the affections. and this is the proper uſe of our preaching: which, though it be overvalued by thoſe who place all religion in hearing, yet certainly it is of excellent uſe, and ought to be managed with a great deal of care. let the matter be weighty and grave, the method plain and clear, the expreſſion neither ſoaring on the one hand, nor too familiar on the other. ſome good

men are not aware what contempt they draw on religion by their coarſe and homely alluſions, and the ſilly and trivial proverbs they make uſe of. nor ſhould our expreſſions be too ſoft and effeminate, nor our pronunciation affected or childiſh. religion is a rational and manly thing, and we ſhould ſtrive to recommend it with the greateſt advantage. but, above all, let us ſtudy ſuch a zeal and fervour, as, flowing from the deep ſenſe of the thing we ſpeak, and being regulated with prudence and decency, may be fitteſt to reach the hearts of the hearers. the vulgar that ſit under the pulpit, (as the excellent Herbert ſpeaks), are commonly as hard and dead as the ſeats they ſit on, and need a mountain of fire to kindle them. the beſt way is, to preach the things firſt to ourſelves, and then frequently to recollect in whoſe preſence we are, and whoſe buſineſs we are doing. and I think it is no ſmall advantage to this purpoſe, that ſome of a neighbouring nation have, who make ſome conſiderable pauſe when they have done

with a point, that they may raiſe their ſouls towards God, and that the people may renew their attention.

But, when we have done all that we can by publick and general exhortation, we ſhall effectuate very little without a more particular application to the perſons under our charge. intereſt and ſelf-love will blind the eyes, and ſtop the ears of men, and make them ſhift off from themſelves thoſe admonitions from the pulpit that are diſpleaſing: and therefore we are commanded not only to *teach and exhort*, but alſo to *rebuke with all authority*. now, thoſe whom we are to rebuke, are either perſons of a different perſuaſion, who diſſent from our religion, or withdraw from our ordinances; and theſe muſt be dealt with very patiently, and with much long-ſuffering. 'tis not to be expected, that an haſty conference, or an abrupt diſputation, ſhould prevail with thoſe who have been long habituated to falſe perſuaſions, and perhaps have drunk them in with the firſt of their ſerious thoughts and religious inclinations. we muſt firſt

ſtudy to combat the perverſeneſs of their will, the prejudices of the world, the deſire of victory and applauſe, their pre-engagement in a party, and their ſhame and unwillingneſs to yield; and ſtrive to render them meek and pliable, and ſincerely deſirous to know the truth. when we have obtained this, they will be both more eaſily convinced, and more inexcuſable, if through weakneſs they ſtill continue in their errors. but let us never reſt in having drawn over a perſon to our party, till we have engaged him to ſerioufneſs in the practice of religion: for, if he continue a ſtranger to that, it is little matter whether he be *Proteſtant or Papiſt*, *Pagan or Mahometan*, or any thing elſe in the world; nay, the better his religion is, the more dreadful will his condemnation be. it was an excellent ſaying of an eminent and holy perſon yet alive in our church, That he would rather be inſtrumental in perſuading one man to be ſerious in religion, than the whole nation to be Conformiſts. the other ſort of perſons we have to rebuke, are thoſe

of our own religion, for the vices and failings of their lives. and this muſt be done with a great deal of courage and zeal, of prudence and diſcretion, of meekneſs and love. more knowing and ingenious perſons may be dealt with ſometimes by ſecret inſinuations, and oblique reflexions on the vices they are guilty of; and we may ſometimes ſeek a way to reprove their failings, by regretting and condemning our own. but that artifice is not neceſſary for the vulgar: having proteſted our love and good intentions, it will be beſt to fall roundly to the matter. now, this does ſuppoſe a great deal of care, to acquaint ourſelves with the humours and converſation of our people; and the name of watchmen that is given us, implieth no leſs. and though the lamentable vaſtneſs of ſome of our charges make it impoſſible to do all we could wiſh, yet muſt we not fail to do what we can. it is an excellent practice of ſome I have the happineſs to be acquainted with, who ſeldom miſs any day wherein they do not apply themſelves to ſome

or other of their people, and treat about the affairs of their ſouls.

Another thing which may be implied in 'rebuking with all authority,' is, the conſcientious exerciſe of that authority which Chriſt hath given us in the publick cenſures and rebukes of the church. but of this I ſhall ſay no more, ſave only that it were an intolerable preſumption, and horrid ſacrilege, to make uſe of theſe to ſerve the ends of our paſſions and private revenge.

The laſt clauſe of the paſſage we cited ſounds ſomewhat ſtrange, 'let no man 'deſpiſe thee.' ſure no body deſires to be deſpiſed; and it is not always in the power of man to hinder it. but the meaning of the words is, that there ſhould be nothing in our carriage and deportment which may deſerve contempt. we ought ſtill to have that apology of the orator in readineſs, 'quid 'putem? contemptumne me? equidem 'non video quid ſit in vita moribuſque 'noſtris quod deſpicere poſſit.' there is nothing that doth expoſe a Miniſter to ſo much contempt, as a vitious and

irreligious deportment. even thoſe who are profane themſelves, and love vice in their other companions, do yet abhor it in a clergyman, as thinking it too groſs and diſingenuous, to practiſe all the week what he hath been condemning on Sunday. I ſhall not inſiſt upon the groſſer ſort of vices. 'nolo tam male 'ominari de eccleſia:' I would not bode ſo much evil to the church, as to imagine the clergy capable of them. I ſhall point but to a few things, which, though leſs heinous in their nature, tend much to the contempt and diſreſpect of the clergy.

And, firſt, the leaſt imputation of covetouſneſs doth a great deal of miſchief this way. and ye know it will be reckoned covetouſneſs in you, which is not ſo in others. you will be more blamed for taking your own, than they for incroaching on their neighbours. and therefore, to prevent this imputation, ſo far as the meanneſs of a Miniſter's proviſion, and neceſſity of his family, will permit, he ſhould ſhew him-

ſelf frank and liberal in his dealings, eſpecially with the poorer ſort.

Another occaſion of contempt is, the too much frequenting the company of the laicks, and a vain and trifling converſation among them. it was a wiſe ſaying, whoever he was that ſpoke it, 'Quotidiana clericorum cum laicis 'converſatio contemptibiles ipſos red-'dit.' and that of Hierom to Nepotian is very obſervable, 'facile contemnitur 'clericus ſi ad prandium invitatus ſaepi-'us veniat.' a Miniſter in his converſation ought carefully to avoid all fooliſh and exceſſive jeſting, and immoderate mirth. I could never think it a good character of a clergyman, to call him a merry fellow, or a notable droll; and yet I do not condemn all chearfulneſs and freedom, nor the innocent exerciſes of wit. but it is one thing, to make uſe of theſe now and then when they come in our way, and another, to ſearch and hunt after them; and thoſe who have the knack of it, are ready enough to fall into exceſs.

A third thing which will bring a

clergyman into contempt, is, an unallowable patience in hearing his maſter diſhonoured by the oaths and profane talk of thoſe of whom he ſtandeth in awe. my brethren, if we had no more but the common principles of ingenuity and honour, they might make us reſent theſe as greater affronts than if men ſhould ſpit in our faces; and yet this is but one of the meaneſt engagements that lie upon us, to check theſe exorbitancies with the greateſt ſeverity.

I ſhall name but another; and it is this; when men, on deſign to avoid this contempt, would ſeem to diſclaim their employment, by imitating the habit and deportment of ſecular perſons; when they ſtudy the Gentleman ſo much, that they forget the clergyman. if we be aſhamed of our own employment, no wonder if others deſpiſe it. far different were the thoughts of that worthy gentleman, and excellent miniſter, whom I named before, that ſweet ſinger of Iſrael, Mr. Herbert, who, the ſame night that he was admitted into the office of the Miniſtry, ſaid to his friend, "I now

"look back on my aſpiring thoughts,
"and I think myſelf more happy, than
"if I had attained what I ſo ambitiouſly
"thirſted for. and I can now behold
"the court with an impartial eye, and
"ſee plainly, that it is made up of fraud,
"and titles, and flattery, and many ſuch
"other imaginary painted pleaſures.
"my greateſt ambition from henceforth
"ſhall be, that I bring glory to my
"Jeſus, whom I have this day taken
"to be my maſter and governor; and
"am ſo proud of his ſervice, that I will
"always obſerve and obey, and do his
"will, and always call him *Jeſus my*
"*maſter*. I will always contemn my
"birth, and any title or dignity that
"can be conferred upon me, when I
"ſhall compare them with the title of
"being a Prieſt, and ſerving at the altar
"of Jeſus my maſter."

I am afraid I have incroached too far on your patience. I ſhall cloſe all with the ſerious obteſtation of our great Apoſtle to Timothy; which you may believe I durſt not utter in my own name, but in the name of the great Maſter of

us all: 'I charge thee before God, and 'the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge 'the quick and the dead at his appear-'ing, and his kingdom: preach the 'word, be inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of 'ſeaſon; reprove, rebuke, exhort with 'all long-ſuffering and doctrine*.' and the Lord, of his mercy, ſo aſſiſt and proſper us all in his own work, that we may be the happy inſtruments of advancing his kingdom, and the welfare of ſouls, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, to whom, &c.

* 2 Tim. iv. 1. 2.

A SERMON PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL OF THE REVEREND *HENRY SCOUGAL*, A. M.

BY

GEORGE GAIRDEN, D. D.

PHIL. i. 21.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

IT hath been the usual practice of all nations in the world, of whatsoever religion, sect, or persuasion, to leave upon record to after ages, the lives and memorable actions of those who have been eminent among them for great or good things. and however this practice may have been abused, sometimes to serve the interest of a sect or party, or other undue ends; yet that the memory of good men ought thus to be transmitted to posterity, may be deduced both from scripture and common reason; it being fit thus to manifest the grace and goodness of God in men,

and thereby to advance his glory and kingdom; and to make their light ſo ſhine before others, that they may be uſeful inſtructions to the world, and incentives to follow their examples. to this we owe the remembrance of all thoſe good and great men recorded in the Old Teſtament: nay, on this is grounded the eſtabliſhment and purity of our moſt holy religion. we have left us the memorials of the life and doctrine of our bleſſed Lord and maſter in the holy goſpels, and the acts of his Apoſtles, whom he ſent to convert the world. and the pious Chriſtians of ſucceeding ages, according to this pattern, were careful, both by publick diſcourſes and writings, to awaken their own and after times, with the remembrance of the zeal and piety of holy and devout perſons.

And now, if, by the general practice and conſent of all men, records of exemplary piety and goodneſs be thus uſeful to poſterity, even though they be ſtrangers to the perſons of thoſe whoſe lives and actions are tranſmitted to them; I am ſure we have much more reaſon to

think, that ſome ſeaſonable and uſeful meditations, at ſuch a time and in ſuch a place as this is, may have ſome influence on our minds, when we have here before us the remains of our departed friend, who hath ſo lately left this world; whoſe preſence and converſation was ſo comfortable to us; whoſe innocence and goodneſs were ſo exemplary; whoſe good-will, affection, and beneficence were ſo ſincere and univerſal; whoſe remembrance is ſo dear to us; who was ſo much the ſtay and honour of our church, and ſo univerſally beloved and eſteemed by all. ſure the ſenſe of all theſe, and the ſight of all this funeral-attendance, cannot but caſt our ſouls into ſome deep thoughts. and to this I doubt not but your hearts bear witneſs. would I could ſay ſomething uſeful for your meditations, and ſuitable to your preſent temper and this ſubject! God aſſiſt and direct our thoughts.

When I reflect upon the life and ſpirit of our friend, (of the which I have had the honour and happineſs to have been ſo frequent an obſerver), and when I

conſider the conſtant temper and diſpoſition of his ſoul, as to this and the other world, the great reſignation of his mind, his willingneſs to ſtay here, that he might do ſome ſervice to his ever bleſſed Maker and Redeemer; and yet his chearful thoughts and apprehenſions of that happineſs that is above, and his ardent breathings after it; methinks I hear always from him the words of St. Paul, 'to me to live is 'Chriſt, and to die is gain.'

I ſhall not trouble you with any large explanation, nor with the various readings of theſe words; we ſhall only conſider them in their moſt obvious ſenſe and meaning. the bleſſed Apoſtle, being in bonds at Rome, writes this letter to the Philippians, to exhort them to a perſeverance in the faith of Chriſt, and to have their converſation ſuitable to it. and, that they might not be diſcouraged by his bonds, he tells them the happy fruits of them, how much they had conduced for the furtherance of the goſpel; that the knowledge of his ſuffering with ſuch conſtancy for that religion which

he had formerly ſo zealouſly oppoſed, was ſpread throughout that city, and manifeſt in the Palace itſelf: ſo that thereby many were converted to the faith of Chriſt, and others ſtrengthened in it, and made more bold to preach the goſpel; ſo that Chriſt was preached every where, by ſome out of envy at the glory and fame he acquired in planting the goſpel there, and by others in ſincerity, and out of love and good-will. ſo that he hoped, whether by life or death, Chriſt ſhould be magnified in him; if he lived, by his conſtant preaching his goſpel, and living his life; if he died, by ſigning the truth of it with his blood: *For to me to live is Chriſt.* "the whole "of my life in this world, the end of my "living here, the great aim of all my "thoughts, and deſigns, and actions, is "Chriſt; to be endued with his Spirit, "and lead his life; to ſpread his goſpel, "and enlarge his kingdom. I have no "other deſign than this. God knows, "and the world ſees, whether I mind "riches, or pleaſures, or glory among "men. no: I have conſecrated my

" life and ſpirit to my bleſſed Lord and
" Maſter; and they ſhall be employed
" in his ſervice. Chriſt is my life: ſo
" that I live; yet not ſo much I, as
" Chriſt that liveth in me."

Few words, but full of ſenſe and truth. they are not like thoſe airy expreſſions, which, when ſearched into, have nothing but fancy and imagination at the bottom of them; but they contain the very marrow of Chriſtianity, and the whole of a Chriſtian ſpirit, the compleat character of his life, and a perfect inſtruction for ours. and this will appear if we conſider a little more diſtinctly their importance. for one to live to another may be ſaid in two reſpects, 1. when he is endued with the ſame ſpirit, and has the ſame temper of mind, and leads the ſame kind of life; and, 2. when his heart and life is wholly devoted to his love and ſervice; when he loves him above all, and minds nothing more than his intereſt, and employs his life in ſerving his deſigns, and doing his will. and, in both theſe reſpects, (which indeed cannot be

ſeparated), we may conſider the Apoſtle's words, *To me to live is Chriſt*, or, Chriſt is my life.

I. *Firſt*, As he was endued with the Spirit, and led the life of his bleſſed maſter: 'be ye followers of me,' ſaith he, 'even as I alſo am of Chriſt.' and indeed this is the great deſign of Chriſtianity, and the trueſt character of a Chriſtian. all our duty and all our happineſs conſiſts in the being like unto God, and the living in that dependence upon, and ſubjection to him, that reaſonable creatures owe their Almighty Creator. now, ſeeing 'God dwelleth in that light which 'no man can approach unto, whom no 'man hath ſeen nor can ſee;' therefore the only begotten Son, which is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him. he hath clothed himſelf with our fleſh, and become man, and converſed amongſt us like one of ourſelves, and ſhewn what the Father is, and how we muſt be like him. would we know how God would live amongſt us, were he clothed with our nature and infirmities, if he dwelt in our fleſh, and were viſible

to our eyes? behold the Son of God, conſider his life and Spirit, and this is the life of God; for 'he is the bright-'neſs of his Father's glory, and the ex-'preſs image of his perſon.' would we learn how far our nature is capable of being like unto God, how we muſt be partakers of the Divine nature, and be renewed in the ſpirit of our minds, putting on the new man, which 'after God 'is created in righteouſneſs and true 'holineſs?' conſider Jeſus Chriſt, ſubject to the infirmities of our nature, and living the life of God. behold, he hath given us an example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps. he is the light of the world; 'and they that follow 'him, ſhall not walk in darkneſs. in him 'was life, and his life was the light of 'men, though darkneſs comprehended 'it not.' conſider the profound humility of his ſoul; the great meekneſs of his ſpirit; the entire reſignation of his will to his heavenly Father; the unſpotted purity of his deſires and affections, wholly mortified as to this lower world; the ardency of his love to God, and his

zeal and delight to do his will; his wonderful patience under the greateſt ſufferings; his unintereſted, ſincere, and boundleſs charity towards men, doing good even to thoſe who hated and perſecuted him, and dying for thoſe who crucified him. in theſe, and in all other graces, he hath gone before us, and called upon us to learn of him, and follow him. for this end did he live and die, to endue us with his Spirit, and change our nature into his. he humbled himſelf to our nature, that he might make us partakers of his: he hath revealed unto us the nature of God, and his undeſerved grace and goodneſs to us, and our unſpeakable miſery, and corruption, and eſtrangement from our heavenly Father; and hath put us again into a capacity of being his children, he himſelf becoming our elder brother. he hath raiſed us unto the hopes of the enjoyment of God for evermore in boundleſs felicity, that we might thus purify ourſelves as God is pure. he hath breathed his Holy Spirit into the world, to inſpire us with his life, and

change us into his image; and he hath told us, that without this we ſhall never ſee the face of God. we have therefore all the obligations in the world to make Chriſt our life, and to follow Jeſus. this is the only mark and character whereby God will own and acknowledge us for his. it is, beſides, our greateſt glory and honour, to imitate ſo bleſſed an example, and a wonderful expreſſion of goodneſs and condeſcenſion, for the Son of God to come down from heaven to give us this pattern. he is the moſt perfect example of purity and holineſs, in whom there was no ſpot nor blemiſh, who had no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth; but his life was uniform, and always pure, and conſtant to himſelf. and yet he hath given us the moſt plain and familiar copy, and the moſt exactly fitted to the ſtate and condition of men in this world. he did not retire into cells and cloiſters, as if none could walk as he walked but monks and recluſes; but he converſed freely in the world, and lived in cities and villages, in company and converſe

with others. his piety did not break forth into ſevere faſting, and an exceſs of other bodily auſterities, in ecſtatick raptures, and enthuſiaſtick fits, ſuch as the lives of the famed ſaints of the Romiſh church are ſtuffed with; but it was a plain life, of juſtice and charity, meekneſs and humility, patience and contentedneſs, and a readineſs to do good to all men; a life that is imitable by all, from the greateſt prince to the pooreſt peaſant. the very importance of our name and profeſſion, the calling ourſelves Chriſtians, obliges us to follow the example, and lead the life of Chriſt. and, if we mean not this by it, we mean nothing to the purpoſe: 'for 'he that ſaith he abideth in him, ought 'himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even as he 'walked.' nay, it is this only, the being endued with his Spirit, that can intitle us to an intereſt in him, and that happineſs he hath purchaſed for us: 'for 'if any man hath not the Spirit of 'Chriſt, he is none of his;' ſo great and many are the obligations that we have to follow Jeſus. his commands are

nothing but the tranſcript of his own life and ſpirit: we ought always to have him in our eye, and in every diſpoſition of our ſoul, in every undertaking and deſign; to conſider how our bleſſed maſter would have done in theſe circumſtances, and aſpire always to have the ſame mind that was in him; and never reſt till Chriſt be formed in us.

But, alas! how unlike are we to the holy Jeſus! Chriſtians in name and profeſſion, but not in deed and in truth. how unworthy a character would it make of him, to meaſure him by the lives and ſpirits of thoſe who call themſelves his followers! alas! in what paſſage or period of our life can we ſay ſincerely, *To me to live is Chriſt?* do we propoſe to ourſelves the ſame deſigns? are we endued with any ſpark of his boundleſs charity? do our ſouls burn with love to God, or have we ſuch a ſincere good-will to our neighbours? are our deſires and affections crucified to this world, and enlivened towards heaven? yea, what conformity is there in our

outward lives unto his moſt holy life? where is that forwardneſs to do good to all men, that meek ſuffering of injuries, and ready forgiving of enemies, and doing them good? is ſcraping and ſcrambling after wealth, and this world's trifles; is rioting, and wallowing in ſenſual pleaſures, and living like brutes; is contending for places and glory among men; is ſtrife and envy, contention and evil-ſpeaking, and other ſuch like works of the fleſh; are theſe, I ſay, becoming the followers of Jeſus Chriſt? is this to live like him, or are they the fruits of his ſpirit? nay, ſure, in this our hearts cannot but condemn us; and, alas! our lives do teſtify againſt us.

But indeed well might the Apoſtle ſay ſo, *To me to live is Chriſt*, who was ſo much endued with his Spirit, and conformed to his life; whom nothing could ſeparate from the love of God; who rejoiced as much in ſuffering his will, as in doing it; who was ſo often in labour, and ſtripes, and priſons, in perils of all ſorts, in watching, and hunger and thirſt, in faſtings, and cold, and

nakedneſs; ſo far was he from enjoying the pleaſures of the world: who knew ſo well both how to abound and be in want, and in whatſoever ſtate, therewith to be content; who was ſo much crucified to the world, and the world unto him; whoſe love and charity was ſo exuberant and boundleſs towards his brethren, being ready to ſpend and to be ſpent for them, though the more he loved, the leſs he was loved again; who travelled through the world to make men better, and ſpared no pains or labour to make them happy, ſpending his life in this employment, and enduring all kind of hardſhips in it. ſo that, in a word, he lived; yet not ſo much he, as Chriſt that lived in him.

II. But, *ſecondly*, theſe words do import, that his heart and life were wholly devoted to the ſervice of Chriſt; that he loved him above all things, and minded nothing more than his intereſt, and employed his life in ſerving his deſigns, and doing his will, and lived by his faith. the life of man in this world, is to be conſidered both as to the inward and

outward man. the former, which is that of the ſoul, conſiſts in the underſtanding, the will, and the affections; the other, being the outward life and converſation, is regulated according to the inward diſpoſitions of the ſoul. and as a man's ſentiments and diſpoſitions are, ſuch is his life. now, as the life of the body is ſtrangely diſordered, when the blood and ſpirits do not run in their ordinary courſe, but make convulſive and involuntary motions, which are nothing uſeful to the body, nor guided by the will; ſo the life of our ſouls is ſo corrupted, as that we may be ſaid to be dead while we live, when our judgment is blind and falſe, our will perverſe and crooked, our affections earthly and carnal, and we do not follow the will of God. and this is the ſtate of our life by nature. what a ſtrange blindneſs is there in the ſpirit of man? we underſtand almoſt nothing of the greateſt things, and judge perverſely of other things. how little do we know of God, of our ſouls, of their miſery, or wherein their true happineſs

conſiſts, or of the ſtate after this life? and how perverſely do we judge of the trifles of this life, as if our happineſs and our All were ſummed up in them? how corrupt are the affections and diſpoſitions of our hearts? we love what we ought to hate; we truſt what will certainly fail us, and diſtruſt that which ſhould be our only confidence; we fear that which can do us no harm, and are regardleſs of our greateſt danger; we buſy ourſelves about trifles, or things that will certainly ruin us, and do not mind our greateſt intereſts. now, Jeſus Chriſt is come into the world full of grace and truth, to renew the ſpirit of our minds, and to change the diſpoſition of our hearts, and the courſe of our lives; and the life that we ought to lead, is *by the faith of the Son of God*, who loved us, and gave himſelf for us. we muſt not live by ſenſe, and our own fooliſh paſſions, and ſentiments of things; but according to thoſe ſentiments and that faith that he by his word and Spirit inſpires us with. to ſerve Jeſus Chriſt, is to live by his faith; and

'to live by the faith of the Son of God,' is to judge and esteem of things as he has revealed them, and as he would have us, and accordingly to guide and direct our hearts and lives; to love what he bids us love, and hate what he would have us to hate; to hope and trust in his promises; to do what he commands, and forbear and avoid what he forbids; and to employ our life in doing his will, and serving his designs. he hath taught us to make a right judgment and estimate of things; to have a deep sense of the unspeakable misery and sinfulness of our corrupted nature, of the infinite greatness, goodness, and mercy of God, and the wonderful contrivance and value of our redemption. he has shewn us the worth and the degeneracy of our souls, and what great things they are capable of by the pure grace and favour of God. he hath laid open the deceitful appearances of this present world, and the great moment of that eternity of joy or misery that awaits us hereafter. he hath made known to us what great things he hath done and suffered for us,

and what boundleſs compaſſion and love he has for ſuch undeſerving creatures. now, the ſpring of that life we ſhould live by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, is, to have our underſtandings renewed and enlightened, and to judge ſincerely and aright of theſe things, according as he who is Truth itſelf hath revealed them unto us: and that not to gratify our curioſity in knowing them, or making them matter of vanity, and talk to others; for then we know nothing as we ought: but to have ſuch a deep ſenſe and feeling of them, as to enliven our hearts, and guide our practices. for then do we truly live by the faith of Chriſt, when the ſenſe of our own ſinfulneſs and miſery ſinks us into the deepeſt humility, and ſincere abhorrence of ourſelves; and the thoughts of the unſpeakable goodneſs, love, and mercy of God, and what our ever bleſſed Redeemer hath done, ſuffered, and purchaſed for us, inſpire our hearts with ardent love to them; and this becomes the ſpring of all our actions; makes us delight to do his will, and be well pleaſed to ſuffer

it; and ſtudy always to promote his intereſt in the world, to make him be known and loved by all we can; and ſeek his glory and honour in all we do, and not our own.

Thus to us *to live is Chriſt.* thus ought we to guide our underſtandings by his light, to inflame our hearts with his love, to ſpend our lives in his ſervice, and direct our actions to his glory. but, alas! how generally are thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians void of this life and ſpirit? who is there that ſincerely makes an eſtimate and judgment of things according to the light of Jeſus Chriſt? that thinks himſelf truly worthy to be hated by all? that really counts the honours and promotions, the wealth and pleaſures of this world, as ſo many ſnares to his ſoul? that heartily values the favour and approbation of God, beyond the eſteem and praiſe of men? and however ſome men may have ſome fruitleſs ſpeculations in their underſtandings about ſuch like truths; yet, alas! how few ſuffer them to ſink into their hearts, and

direct their lives? where is the love of Jesus? the lively hopes and ardent desires after the glory that is to be revealed? the true fear of God, or trust in him, or a sincere desire and delight to do his will? and whatever professions may be made of all these, yet where do the fruits of them appear in men's lives and conversations? for the tree is known by its fruit. how few actions are there that seem to proceed from the hearty love of Christ? wherein do we sincerely aim at the good of men, and the happiness of their souls? when do we singly propose to ourselves the glory of God, and the doing him service? what instances are there in our conversation that seem to flow from an unfeigned humility, and truly mean thoughts of ourselves? alas! it would puzzle us, I fear, to instance the action or period of our life that flowed purely from such principles. we are creatures of sense, and guided by other measures; the love of reputation among men; a concern for the conveniencies and pleasures of this life, and an aversion to the trou-

bles of it; a desire of transcending others in power, wealth, or knowledge; a natural sloth of spirit, and inconsideration of mind; and, which is the root of all, pride, and a blind and inordinate self love. these are the springs that put all in motion; by these principles we are guided in our designs, they mingle themselves with our best performances: and an impartial consideration may make us sensible, that there are few actions wherein some one or other of these have not always a great stroke and interest.

But it is far otherways with St. Paul; who however before his conversion he was acted by a blind zeal, yet no sooner had that glorious light which dazzled the eyes of his body, enlightened those of his mind, but he made appear by his life and spirit, that he lived by the faith of the Son of God, and that to him *to live was Christ*. how did that light and life shine before men; and how manifest were they in him, who 'counted all 'things but dung and loss, for the ex-'cellency of the knowledge of Christ

'Jeſus?' who gloried in nothing ſo much as his 'croſs, by which the world 'was crucified to him, and he unto the 'world? who reckoned the ſufferings 'of this preſent time not worthy to be 'compared with the glory that is to be 'revealed?' whom neither worldly advantage, nor the greateſt croſſes and afflictions, neither the power or malice of devils and men, could *ſeparate from the love of Chriſt?* who gloried in nothing more than in ſuffering for him? whoſe zeal was ſo great, and his induſtry and diligence ſo vigorous, and his care and management ſo prudent and wiſe in propagating his life and ſpirit, and ſpreading his doctrine? who made ſo ſudden a change throughout the world, and ſo many nations his diſciples? whoſe divine letters have ſo much tended to the eſtabliſhment and propagation of the goſpel in that and all ſucceeding generations? a ſingle paſſage of one of which occaſioned the converſion of one of the greateſt fathers of the church: in which holy epiſtles the Chriſtian doctrine is ſo well

repreſented; wherein perſons of all ranks and conditions have their duties ſo clearly deſcribed; where Biſhops, and paſtors, and people, rich and poor, husband and wife, parents and children, maſters and ſervants, the proſperous and the afflicted, may learn their Chriſtian duty and deportment in their ſeveral circumſtances.

But I forbear to ſpeak of that great Apoſtle of the Gentiles. the preſent occaſion leads us hither; nor ſhall I preſume to make a parallel. I know 'there is one glory of the ſun, another 'of the moon, and another of the ſtars; 'and one ſtar differeth from another 'ſtar in glory.' as the happineſs of the other world, ſo the piety and goodneſs of this have their degrees and meaſures. I ſhall only conſider for our inſtruction, how in its own meaſure the life and ſpirit of our friend do breathe forth the ſame ſentiments, *To me to live is Chriſt;* how his life and example, his converſation and inſtructions, his thoughts and deſigns, the inward endowments and diſpoſitions of his ſoul, and the outward de-

portment and actions of his life, were, as to the main, the fruits and effects of a Chriſtian ſpirit, of a holy and divine temper of mind; and how they all tended and were employed to increaſe the ſame in himſelf, and ſtir it up in others, and to revive ſomething of the ancient Chriſtian piety and goodneſs in the world.

To me to live is Chriſt. indeed well may it be ſaid of his life, whoſe early beginnings and firſt bloſſoms were ſeaſoned with pious inclinations, as well as the maturer periods of it. the right managing of infancy and childhood, is ordinarily the leaſt of a parent's care; and any pious exerciſes are uſually the leaſt of childrens thoughts. every trifle tickles their fancies, and takes up their ſpirits: little paſſions and envies, and other iſſues of our natural corruption, begin to ſprout forth even in that tender age. but in our deceaſed friend, as it was his father's pious deſign to devote him to the ſervice of God and his church in this holy function, who did therefore take a ſuitable care even of his infancy and childhood; ſo his pious inclina-

tions, and the ſuitable diſpoſition of his ſpirit, did happily conſpire with it; and he gave early indications of them even in thoſe tender years. he was not taken up with the plays and little diverſions of thoſe of his age, (which children ſo much dote upon); but upon ſuch occaſions did uſually retire from them; and that not out of ſullenneſs of humour, or dulneſs of ſpirit, (the ſweetneſs and ſerenity of whoſe temper did even then appear), but out of a ſtayedneſs of mind, going to ſome privacy, and employing his time in reading, prayer, and ſuch ſerious thoughts as that age was capable of. ſometimes he would be taken up with the thoughts of the law of Moſes, wondering how altars and ſacrifices, and its other ceremonies, were not now among the exerciſes of our worſhip; at other times employing himſelf in little imitations of the exerciſes of the holy function, as preaching, and the like. and among other inſtances of the happy fruits of ſuch retirements, this deſerves to be remembered, that, being once in a ſerious reflexion what courſe of life

he ſhould take that might be conducive to the ſalvation of his ſoul, and being in a deep muſe of thoughts, he takes up the Bible to read a portion of it; and though he was always averſe to the making a lottery of the holy ſcriptures, yet he could not but take notice of the firſt words which occaſionally he caſt his eyes upon, and which made no ſmall impreſſion on his ſpirit: 'by what 'means ſhall a young man learn to pu-'rify his way? by taking heed thereto 'according to thy word.' the diverſions he was then moſt taken with, did ſpeak out the greatneſs of his mind and ſpirit; and he ſeemed to act all the grandeur of this world while a child: for when, in learning the Latin tongue, he began to underſtand the Roman ſtory, he retired uſually with the moſt ingenious of his fellows, compoſed little orations, and acted the parts of the Roman Senators. I cannot here omit that vaſtneſs of memory, and forwardneſs of judgment, which did even then appear; in that, when he began to take notice of the daily reading of the holy ſcriptures at

home, he could not only repeat ſeveral verſes at that time, whether the hiſtorical or other parts; but afterwards, upon the turning to any ſuch particular chapter, could call them to remembrance: and whereas thoſe of that age can for the moſt part remember only ſome little incoherent paſſages of publick ſermons, he did uſually take up their whole ſcope, and give a brief account of them. and though children generally love only the ſociety of their fellows, or ſuch as can entertain them with ſilly and fooliſh ſtories; yet ſuch was the ſerioufneſs of his ſpirit, and the love he even then had for knowledge and good men, that when he had the opportunity of hearing ſerious and reverend perſons, who uſed to reſort to his father's houſe, he was careful to attend to them, and liſten to their wiſe and pious diſcourſes. his improvements in human literature were beyond the ordinary attainments of his age; having not only acquired a ſingular and unaffected elegancy in the Latin tongue, but alſo a conſiderable proficiency in the Greek, and in the

Hebrew, and ſome other of the Oriental languages; being verſed alſo in hiſtory, and in geometry, and other parts of the mathematicks. and ſuch was the clearneſs of his apprehenſion, and the forwardneſs of his judgment, that, upon the overhearing an occaſional diſcourſe of ſome who were paſſing their firſt years in the univerſity, he did quickly take up the nature of a ſyllogiſm, the uſe of the ſymbols in contriving it, and could readily form one upon any ſubject.

Such were his attainments, and ſuch was the temper of his ſpirit in that early period of his life, which others for the moſt part ſpend in vanity and folly, and begin to repent of when they come to think themſelves men. and we may ſee how much a prudent father's wiſe and pious care, when it meets with a fit temper and diſpoſition in a child, may contribute to plant the ſeeds of thoſe virtuous endowments and good inclinations in that tender age, which will bring forth much fruit in their riper years; and with how much reaſon the wiſe man bids us, 'train up a child in the way he

'ſhould go, and when he is old he will 'not depart from it.'

But the paths of the juſt are as the ſhining light, which ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day. theſe were the early dawnings of piety and goodneſs which appeared in him in thoſe firſt years of his age, before he came to this corner of our land; and there became ſtill more manifeſt and conſpicuous. his improvements had now fitted him for the univerſity; and here he gave further proofs of a pious diſpoſition and a capacious underſtanding. he was far removed from thoſe levities and fooliſh cuſtoms, thoſe little animoſities and ſtrifes which the inconſiderate youth are ſometimes guilty of; but was even then grave and ſtayed in his deportment, as was obſerved by all, yet free and unaffected. the learning that was then in faſhion, though he ſaw quite through it, yet it did not ſatisfy his underſtanding, nor could he perceive its uſe, ſave to wrangle *pro* and *con* about any thing. he was deſirous to dive into the nature of things, and not to be in-

volved into a ſtrife of hard words, and a maze of nice diſtinctions: and therefore, by his own proper induſtry, and private ſtudy, he became even then maſter of that philoſophy which has now got ſuch footing in the world; beſides a ſingular proficiency he made in the ſeveral parts of mathematicks, in hiſtory, and other human learning. but he was always careful to beware of any philoſophy or falſe knowledge that was apt to have a bad influence on the mind, and debauch the ſpirit, as to a right ſenſe of God and religion; and never ſuffered himſelf to be tainted in the leaſt with ſuch. and there was nothing that more endeared any philoſophical truths to him, than when they gave right apprehenſions of God, and juſt thoughts of morality and virtue. his mind being always compoſed to a religious temper, he even then made it his buſineſs, by the frequent reading of the moſt pious and uſeful books, and a happy converſation, ſanctified by a conſtant devotion, and an unprejudiced mind, to frame to himſelf, amidſt the various o-

pinions and diſtractions of Chriſtendom, right apprehenſions of religion, and accordingly to ſuit his practice: ſo that, even then, religion was the matter of his ſerious and impartial choice, and not merely the prejudice of cuſtom and education. he uſed ſometimes to write eſſays of morality, and occaſional meditations; which as they were ſingularly eloquent and ingenious, ſo they breathed forth the devotion of his mind, and the ſerioufneſs of his ſpirit; and would very well become a riper age. it being the cuſtom of the youth to have private meetings about the ordering the concerns of their commencements, where he was made conſtant preſident among his fellows, his diſcourſes to them were ſo grave and becoming, (as ſome of them have profeſſed), that they looked upon them as the ſayings of a grey head, and thought they ſavoured of the wiſdom of a Senator.

Such was his deportment and improvement for the few years he reſided in the univerſity: ſo that, in the eſteem of all, he did not a little honour that

degree which is then given, of which ſome are ſaid to be ſo much the reproach. and therefore, he no ſooner came out of the univerſity, but he was thought worthy to be a maſter, where he had ſo lately been a ſcholar; and, after having given ſufficient proofs of his fitneſs, by teaching for the next term the claſs of one who was occaſionally abſent, he was accordingly promoted. and even in this ſtation, *to him to live was Chriſt.* he was careful ſo to behave himſelf in his own converſation, and in the exerciſes of that office, as to preſerve his own conſcience pure, and void of offence, and to ſerve the intereſts of Chriſtianity; training up the youth in ſuch principles of learning and goodneſs, as might make them moſt ſerviceable both to church and ſtate. he was careful not to drive on little deſigns, or to maintain factions and heats in the ſociety, but ſtudied always to compoſe them; and, when it would not do, they were his regret; but he was ſure not to make one of them. he always preſerved his authority entire amongſt the unruly

youth, and would quickly compoſe their diſorders and tumults, and yet gain their love and eſteem; and knew well how to entertain them with freedom and kindneſs, and yet oblige them to that reſpect that becomes a ſcholar towards his maſter. ſo far was he from deſigning his own private gain, that when a tumult had ariſen among the unruly youth, in which there were ſome under his care who could eaſily have purchaſed their pardon by the payment of an inconſiderable mulct, and the aſſurance of their good behaviour afterwards; and when ſuch was their perverſeneſs that they would not do it, though his paying it in their name would have done the buſineſs; yet, rather than do ſuch a ſeemingly unworthy act, which might proſtitute authority, and encourage them to the like tumultuous practices, he ſuffered them to be expelled, to his own conſiderable detriment, as to his worldly intereſts, having but a few left behind. he was careful to inſtruct the youth in the moſt intelligible and uſeful principles of human know-

ledge. and it deſerves to be remembered, that he was the firſt in this corner of the land (perhaps in the whole nation) who taught the youth that philoſophy which has now the univerſal preference by all the knowing world. he looked upon it as the moſt proper for framing their judgments, and diſpoſing them to conceive things aright; for taking them off from a diſputing humour, and a vanity in hard words and diſtinctions, and in thinking they knew ſomething when they knew nothing. he thought it ſerved to enlarge and raiſe their apprehenſions of Almighty God, by conſidering the vaſtneſs of his works, and the admirable wiſdom and goodneſs that appeared in the order of the world, and the wonderful contrivance even of the moſt minute creature; that it diſpoſed them to conſider the nature and worth of their immortal ſouls, and of what ſmall moment all the ſenſual pleaſures of this lower world were; and that it inclined them to a more univerſal love and good-will towards all, and to meaner thoughts of themſelves and

their knowledge. he was very careful to train them up in the beſt and moſt uſeful principles of morality, and to guard them againſt the debauched ſentiments of Leviathan. and as he thus made human learning ſerviceable to the ends of piety and religion, ſo he made it his great endeavour to have their minds inſpired with this. on the Lord's days in the evening, he uſually had ſome pious diſcourſes to them, laying open the folly and heinouſneſs of vice and impiety, and the excellency and advantage of religion and goodneſs; and ſuch other conſiderations as might both inſtruct their minds, and gain upon their tempers. and he failed not to deal with each of them apart in private. thoſe who were of bad inclinations, he ſtudied to reform and amend; and in whom he ſaw any appearance of goodneſs, he was careful to encourage and cheriſh them. thus he hath made appear by his practice, that philoſophy and religion are not enemies to one another, but that the ſober and diſcreet uſe of our reaſon makes

us more capable of the truths and graces of our religion.

But God had deſigned him for the more immediate ſervice of his church, unto which he had been devoted from the womb. and therefore, by the counſel of ſome ſerious and reverend perſons in the church, whoſe advices were of great weight with him, he was called forth to preach the goſpel, and a little after entered into holy orders, and was employed, as you know, in the office of the miniſtry in the country; where, though his ſtay was ſo ſhort, yet the proofs that he gave both of his fitneſs for, and zeal in that holy function, were ſingular. he found he had now more obligations lying on him to piety, and innocence of life; and as the ambaſſador of his bleſſed maſter, he muſt be very tender of his honour, and of perſuading thoſe he was ſent unto, to be reconciled to God: and therefore he was careful to ſhun even all appearances of evil. he ſtudied, during his ſhort ſtay, by catechizing, to inſtruct his people, with the greateſt plainneſs and affection, in the right ſenſe and

knowledge of religion and their duty; and to ſhew them the folly and unreaſonableneſs of thoſe ſhifts and pretences whereby they encouraged themſelves in a bad life. he endeavoured to underſtand their tempers, and accordingly to apply himſelf to them. he was deeply ſenſible of the little ſenſe of religion that generally appeared; and when he ſaw any ſpark of goodneſs, how ſtrangely was he cheered with it! he more valued the humble innocence, and chearful contentment and reſignation of one poor woman in that place, than all the more goodly appearances of others; having oft in his mouth, *Indocti coelum rapiunt*. he endeavoured to bring them to a devout and conſtant attendance on the publick worſhip; where he always went, and joined with them at the beginning of it; thinking it very unfit, that the invocation of Almighty God, the reading ſome portions of the holy ſcriptures, making a confeſſion of our Chriſtian faith, and rehearſing the ten commandments, ſhould be looked upon only as a *praeludium* for uſhering in the

people to the church, and the Miniſter to the pulpit. his ſermons were always devout and ſerious, and ſeaſonable; and he endeavoured to fit them to the capacities of the people: and he revived the uſe of lectures *, looking on it as the moſt edifying way, to have (as a great light of this nation uſed to ſay) long texts and ſhort ſermons.

But I muſt not ſo ſlightly paſs over his preaching, in which we are all ſo much concerned. a wiſe man hath lately writ an eſſay, how to make a good uſe of bad ſermons: and it were to be wiſhed we were inſtructed in making good ones; ſuch, I mean, as might have an influence on mens hearts and lives. and ſure I think all who heard him will acknowledge his practice to be no contemptible pattern. he thought it ſhould be a Miniſter's care, to chuſe ſeaſonable and uſeful ſubjects, ſuch as might inſtruct the people's minds, and better their lives; not to entertain them with debates, and ſtrifes of words;

* i. e. *Commenting upon a whole chapter, or large portion of ſcripture.*

that he ſhould expreſs himſelf in the moſt plain and affectionate manner; not in airy and fanciful words, nor in words too big with ſenſe, and having a great many thoughts crowded together, which the people's underſtandings cannot reach; nor in philoſophical terms and expreſſions, which are not familiar to vulgar underſtandings; nor in making uſe of an unuſual word, where there could be found one more plain and ordinary to expreſs the thought as fully. he looked upon it as a moſt uſeful help for compoſing ſermons, to make the Sunday's ſermon the ſubject of our meditation and mental prayer for the foregoing week, that it may thereby ſink deep into our ſpirits, and affect our own hearts, which would make us more capable of teaching others. he thought it a fit expedient for compoſing us to a ſerious and affectionate preaching, to propoſe to ourſelves, in the meditation of it, purely the glory of God, and the good of mens ſouls, and to have this always in our eye; and, in our preaching, to make frequent recol-

lections of the Divine preſence, and ſhort ejaculations towards heaven, thereby to preſerve us in that humble temper, that ſeriouſneſs and gravity that becomes us in the preſence of God, and as the Ambaſſadors of Chriſt. and how conformable was his practice to theſe rules! the matter of his diſcourſes was always ſo uſeful and ſeaſonable, his words and expreſſions ſo plain, and proper, and well choſen, his deportment ſo grave and unaffected, becoming the ſenſe of whoſe ambaſſador he was, his manner of utterance ſo affectionate, and expreſſive of the paſſionate love and concern he had for mens ſouls, accompanied with ſuch an act of ſweetneſs and mildneſs, as charmed mens ſpirits. and all was ſo full of light and heat, that I think I may ſay, in the words of the diſciples concerning our bleſſed Saviour, 'did not our 'hearts burn within us, while he opened 'unto us the ſcriptures?' how did the holy Spirit by him enlighten our minds, and affect our hearts? there are ſome kinds of words and expreſſions, ſome

tones and ways of utterance, which will raiſe the paſſions and affections of prediſpoſed tempers, without at all enlightening their minds, even as muſick does. and there are others capable of laying open the nature and the reaſon of things, but in ſo dry a manner, that they float merely upon our underſtanding as matter of ſpeculation and talk, and do not ſink into our hearts. and tho' there be much noiſe now-a-days about the methods of preaching, and the preferences of one to another; yet it is in this, I am afraid, that we loſe ourſelves on both ſides. but in this, ſure, I may appeal to all that heard him, whether his diſcourſes, and his manner of uttering them, did not ſerve at once both to enlighten their minds, and warm their hearts? and ſo tender was he of the honour and reputation due to the preaching of the goſpel, that as he was careful, on the one hand, to expreſs himſelf in the moſt plain, intelligible, and affectionate words; ſo alſo, on the other, to avoid all childiſh metaphors, apiſh geſtures, jeſts, and big words, and other

ſuch indecencies as did not become the gravity of the function, and were apt to occaſion the ſmiles and laughter of the profane, rather than the piety of the ſerious. and I dare ſay, the moſt profane ſcoffers of the nation were never tempted to turn his expreſſions or geſtures into ridicule. nay, many of avowedly profligate lives have been extremely affected with his ſermons, which pricked them at their hearts, he laid them ſo open to themſelves, and made them ſo ſenſible of their brutiſhneſs and danger, as they themſelves have acknowledged.

I cannot here omit the deep ſenſe he had of true eloquence, and his high value for it; profeſſing he would exchange for it all the other human learning he was maſter of. he was ſenſible of the little knowledge we had in the *ars voluntatis*; how little we underſtood of the nature of mens paſſions and inclinations, and what things were moſt capable of bending their wills, and prevailing upon their minds, according to their different tempers. and accordingly he judged there were two eſſential defects in

our beſt kind of eloquence. the one was, That, in the meditating our diſcourſes, we rather merely conſidered the iſſues of our reaſon, and the nature of the thing we were thinking of, and did not ſo much reflect upon the temper of the perſons we were to ſpeak to, and what kind of reaſonings, words, and expreſſions, would make the beſt impreſſion upon their minds; and therefore it was nothing ſtrange, that words let fly at random touched them ſo little. the other, That our hearts were not thoroughly endued with thoſe diſpoſitions we would work on others by our words; and therefore it was no wonder all we ſaid made ſo little impreſſion on them.

But I come now to the laſt ſtage and period of his life, wherein it moſt eminently appeared, that *to him to live was Chriſt*. God had deſigned him for a more univerſal uſe and ſervice in his church; and therefore, by the wiſe providence of the Almighty, he is removed from a private charge in the country, to a more general one, of training up the youth for the holy miniſtry, and the care of

mens ſouls. promotions of this nature, eſpecially when they are made by the votes of many, are uſually attended with little factions, combinations, and heats: but as the purchaſe was none of his deſign, ſo the general ſenſe of his worth and goodneſs gave him the unanimous voice of the clergy of this dioceſe, who promote to that ſtation, and the univerſal approbation of all that knew him: and the apprehenſion he had of the weight and importance of that office, and his mean thoughts of himſelf, made him deliberate about it till their next meeting. indeed, both his natural, acquired, and moral endowments, made him be judged by all worthy of this charge. his memory was ſingular; and though he loved more to ſtudy things than words, yet, for inſtance, in a few days time he learned to underſtand one of our Weſtern languages, and could read it in Engliſh with more readineſs than thoſe who have lived many years where it is ſpoken. as to things of importance, he could ſoon give them a laſting impreſſion on his

mind; though at length he gave over the committing publick diſcourſes to his memory, profeſſing, when he went about it, he was aſhamed to ſee himſelf at ſuch a childiſh exerciſe. his underſtanding was ready, clear, and piercing; and he would quickly ſee through things in civil affairs, as well as in matters of learning. he did not ſo much read books, as think them; and, by a tranſient view, would quickly comprehend the deſign and marrow of them. he had not ſpent his whole time in reading, being ſenſible that it often ſerved to dull, confuſe, and prejudicate mens underſtandings, and make them of imperious and dictating tempers: and therefore he made a prudent mixture, of a moderate reading a choice of uſeful books, and conſulting the living as well as the dead, having a ſingular art of benefiting both himſelf and others by converſation and diſcourſe; and he digeſted and improved all by retired meditations, and fervent devotion: ſo that his learning ſeemed rather the iſſues of his own mind, and the inſpirati-

on of the Almighty, which teacheth knowledge. he employed two ſummers in going to a neighbouring nation, in which he made it his buſineſs to converſe with thoſe who were of greateſt reputation for learning and goodneſs; where, as he gained their ſingular eſteem and good thoughts, ſo, by uſeful converſation, and a ſerious obſervation of tempers and things, he improved his mind and knowledge. but indeed we may look upon his excellent endowments as the reward of the pious diſpoſitions of his ſoul, and of the good deſigns he propoſed to himſelf in all his ſtudies and endeavours. and God knows, in the undertaking this office, there was nothing he had more before his eyes, than the ſervice of Jeſus Chriſt, and the good of his church. he was deeply ſenſible of the great weight and importance of the holy miniſtry, and did much bewail the general failings in the exerciſe of it; how every man minded 'his own things, 'and not the things of Jeſus Chriſt.' and therefore he made this the one great deſign of all his endeavours in that

charge, the fitting and training up the youth for that holy function; and this was the great aim both of his publick and private care of them.

He conſidered that they ought chiefly to mind and fit themſelves now for that which would be their great buſineſs when they were entered into the holy function; and that this would not be ſo much the managing of controverſies and debates of religion, as the guiding mens ſouls to eternity; the reſcuing the vicious from their ſins and vices, and prevailing upon them by all prudent methods; and directing the ſerious to the true practice and exerciſe of religion, and the moſt proper means for the practice of goodneſs, and the avoiding and reſiſting of temptations, and how they ought to behave themſelves in all circumſtances of life. he thought it ſufficient that they underſtood the ſtate and importance of thoſe controverſies and differences which were the grounds of the diviſions of Chriſtendom, for their own inſtruction, and thoſe who ſtood in need of it under their cure;

but the other he looked upon as their main buſineſs. and therefore, accordingly, after he had guarded them againſt the common artifices of the Roman miſſionaries in their making proſelytes, and cleared the moſt important difficulties in the goſpels; he propoſed two deſigns as the ſubject of all his publick exerciſes. the one, *de cura paſtorali*, propoſing to conſider the inſtitution and dignity, the weight and difficulty, the neceſſity and uſefulneſs of the holy function of the miniſtry; the nature of that call we ought to have to it, the neceſſary diſpoſitions that are required to fit us for it, the manner of our own private life and converſation in it, and how we ought to diſcharge the ſeveral exerciſes of it both publick and private. the other, the inſtruct ing them in *caſuiſtical divinity;* the conſidering how a man of a ſtrait conſcience ought to behave himſelf in whatever ſtate or condition of life he be, and whatever caſes and circumſtances he fall into; and the branching out this into particulars, and vindicating it from the corruption

of the Jeſuits, and others. ſo great and good were the deſigns he propoſed unto himſelf. as to matters of controverſy, he ſtudied rather to leſſen than multiply; and ſaw that men were apter to be reaſoned out of their erroneous perſuaſions by a good life, than many arguments. he thought it enough to make the youth underſtand the true ſtate of matters in debate, and to conſider the moſt weighty differences; but he was careful to take them off as much as poſſible from the diſputing humour, and an itch of wrangling *pro* and *con* about any thing; and many times by ſilence anſwered their impertinent quibbles. there were no debates he was more cautious to meddle with, than thoſe about the decrees of God; being ſenſible how much Chriſtianity had ſuffered, by mens diving into things beyond their reach; 'ſecret things be-'longing to the Lord, and things re-'vealed to us and our children.' but he had always a deep ſenſe of the powerful efficacy of God's grace upon our ſouls; and that all our good was

entirely to be aſcribed to God, and all our evil unto ourſelves. he uſed once a-year, (when the youth were moſt frequent), by a very ſerious and affectionate diſcourſe in Engliſh, to lay before them the weight and importance of the miniſtry; how they ſhould demean themſelves now while they were candidates for that holy function; how carefully they ought to avoid all ſuch evil converſation as might give their minds a bad tincture; what courſe of ſtudy they ought to take; inviting them to a frequent reſort unto him, and expreſſing a moſt affectionate concern for them.

It was alſo his great care, to make his private converſation with them as uſeful as his publick. and by this indeed he hoped to do moſt good. they had always free acceſs to him; and his counſels and advices were ſtill ſuited to the diſpoſitions he perceived in them. he could ſo modeſtly and prudently tell them their failings, as to make them perceive and amend them without being offended. he was careful to lend and

direct them to the use of good books; and, indeed, one of the great ends of his buying so many, was to serve them. those who were of the most eminent endowments and best inclinations, he stirred up to serious thoughts of the holy ministry. he gave them the most undoubted proofs of his love and care of them, opened his heart freely to them, and learned their inclinations and studies. he directed them to the best means of bettering their heart, as well as informing their judgments; prayer, meditation, and frequent retirements: and made them sensible, that self-will was the root of all our sin; and an entire resignation to the will of God, the very spring of all our duty; and directed them to frequent and constant acts of self-denial and resignation. and as he was thus careful of his charge, so also of maintaining that entire correspondence with, and due deference and respect that he owed towards his Reverend Colleague: and that entire and constant love and harmony between them, and that mutual deserved esteem they had

for one another, was very ſingular and very exemplary.

Thus *to him to live was Chriſt.* thus faithfully and prudently did our dear friend manage his charge, in ſerving the intereſt of his bleſſed Maſter. and we might have hoped confidently, ere long, that, by their joint endeavours, through the bleſſing of the Almighty, we ſhould have ſeen another face on our church. but, amidſt all his pious deſigns and cares, he is called by his great Maſter, in an hour that we thought not of, from his ſtewardſhip here, to an higher employment in the other world. 'who is that 'faithful and wiſe ſteward, whom his 'Lord makes ruler over his houſhold, 'to give them their portion of meat in 'due ſeaſon? bleſſed is that ſervant 'whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall 'find ſo doing; of a truth he will make 'him ruler over all that he hath.'

Indeed the end of his life was no leſs Chriſt's than the beginning and whole courſe of it. the time of his ſickneſs was as chearfully ſpent in ſuffering the will of God, as the former was in doing it.

he manifeſted the greateſt meekneſs and chearfulneſs of ſpirit throughout the whole courſe of it. he uſed not the leaſt harſh expreſſion, either to any of thoſe that waited on him, or concerning the preſent providence. he expreſſed a perfect indifferency as to life and death, and an entire reſignation to the will of God, to diſpoſe of him as he thought meet. he found himſelf never more ſenſible of the vanity of this world, nor ever felt more ardent acts of love to God, than at that time. he was rapt in admiration of God's goodneſs to him, and the little returns he ſaid he had made to it; and acknowledged his own great unworthineſs, and his humble confidence in the mercy and goodneſs of God, through the merits of his bleſſed Saviour. and thus meekly did he paſs his ſickneſs, and reſign his ſpirit, without any trouble from the world, or great pain of body, or any anguiſh of mind: for 'mark the perfect man, 'and behold the upright; for the end 'of that man is peace.'

And now, after all, I cannot here o-

mit what ſervice he hath done the world, by permitting it to enjoy thoſe excellent thoughts of his about *the life of God in the ſoul of man.* men may write big volumes, and, as one ſays, talk much, and ſay nothing; but it is a great matter to talk little, and yet ſay much. and ſure, whoever conſiders the importance of the matter of that book, the clear repreſentation of the life and ſpirit of true religion, and its graces, with the great excellency and advantages of it, the propoſal of the moſt effectual means for attaining to it by the grace of God, the piety and ſeaſonableneſs of the devotions, together with the natural and affectionate eloquence of the ſtyle, cannot but be ſenſible of its great uſefulneſs, to inſpire us with the ſpirit of true religion, to enlighten our minds with a right ſenſe and knowledge of it, to warm our hearts with ſuitable affections and breathings after it, and to direct our lives to the practice of it. and indeed, it ſeems to have been in a great meaſure the tranſcript of his own life and ſpirit. thoſe divine graces and virtues which he ſo

clearly deſcribes, ſhined forth in his own life and converſation; and he not only underſtood, but felt them. that faith, and love, and charity, that purity and humility, which he ſo paſſionately recommends and ſpeaks of, did eminently appear throughout the whole courſe of his life.

What a deep ſenſe had he of the truths of our religion! he ſuffered them not to float on his underſtanding, to be matter of talk and diſpute with others; but he let them ſink deep into his ſpirit, to renew his ſoul, and direct his life; and was careful to make uſe of all means that might give him a deeper ſenſe of them. what a deep ſenſe had he of the goodneſs of God, the wonderful mercy of our redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, the corruption, and degeneracy, and ſinfulneſs of our nature, the excellency of goodneſs, and the happineſs of heaven? and his deep ſenſe of all this, was the ſpring and root of all his other graces.

In how manifold inſtances did appear the ardency of his love to God? he was

ſtill breathing with more ardent deſires after him, and was ſorry he could love him no more. he was frequently admiring his wiſdom and goodneſs in the government of the world, and the wiſe diſpoſal of things. it was not the mean principles of cuſtom, reputation, or vain-glory, or a ſervile fear, that made him carefully avoid all evil in his practices; but the ardency of his love to his heavenly Father: and therefore his life was ſo uniform, and conſtant to itſelf, and carefully employed in doing all the good he could, and any thing whereby God might be glorified; and he was ſtill ſenſible how little he could do worthy of his love. his own inclinations were correſpondent to the reſolutions of his pious father from his childhood; and he had devoted himſelf for the ſervice of Jeſus Chriſt in the miniſtry. thoſe in whom he obſerved virtuous endowments, and the moſt pious inclinations, he encouraged by all means to the ſerving of God in the holy function. he endeavoured always after an abſolute reſignation of his will to him, looking

upon this as the very life of all graces. he was very obſerving of the various paſſages of his providence towards him, and very ſenſible of his goodneſs in croſſing ſome deſigns, which he afterwards ſaw would have been inconvenient for him. he was careful to obſerve all the ſteps of Providence; and, when they ſeemed not to approve of his intentions, how eager ſoever his deſires had been, he was ſure not to go one ſtep farther. he was ardent and conſtant in his devotions towards God. his piety and zeal were very eminent in the publick worſhip, when he was the mouth of the people; his devotion was ſo raiſed, and the humble fervour and ſerioufneſs of his ſpirit ſo viſible, as did highly inflame the devotion of the ſerious: and, when he made one of them, the humility and adoration of his ſoul did appear in his outward behaviour; and he thought it one ſuitable expreſſion of it, to bow the knee before that Majeſty, before whom the angels tremble. in the celebration and receiving of the holy communion, his ſoul ſeemed to be wholly

ſwallowed up in the contemplation of Jeſus Chriſt; and his devotion was the admiration of all that ſaw him. he had been conſtant in his private prayers to God from his childhood; and that great ſecret of devotion which he recommends in his book, was his frequent practice: and he ſent up ſometimes ſuch aſpirations of love, with ſuch ardent ſighs, and groaning, and heavings of his ſpirit, as perhaps unclogged his ſpirit, and made his ſoul take its flight ſo ſoon from this earthly tabernacle.

And, ſure, a ſoul ſo much inflamed with the love of God, could not be wanting in a ſuitable charity towards men. and indeed to this his very natural temper ſeemed to incline him. there was nothing of harſhneſs in the diſpoſition of his ſpirit, but it was full of ſweetneſs and love; which appeared in his very air and countenance, and was apt to attract mens hearts at the firſt ſight: and this happy diſpoſition was hallowed and raiſed by the love of God into a holy charity. his ſoul was as wide as the world, and his love and good-will were

univerſal, and every man the object of them. his prayers and good wiſhes were extended to all men; and all the harm he could do his enemies, (if there were any ſuch univerſal haters of mankind as to do him bad offices), was, to pray for them the more earneſtly to God. he did not confine his charity within a ſect or party, but loved goodneſs wherever he found it; and entertained no harſh thoughts of men, merely upon their differing from him in this or that opinion. he was grieved at the diſtractions and diviſions of the church; and that religion, the bond of love, ſhould be made ſo much the bone of contentions.

What prudent methods would his ſincere love and charity to others prompt him to, to undeceive them in their errors? how meekly would he diſcourſe with them about their differences? calmly ſhewing the ſmall importance of ſome things, not worth the contending for, and making appear the bad influence that other things had as to holineſs and a good life; and yielding in others, again, that were not contrary to the deſigns of reli-

gion; making them ſenſible of the ſincerity of his ſoul, and his hearty good-will to them. he was far from maintaining a difference upon the account of ſtoutneſs of humour, or keeping up the reputation of a ſect or party, being deſirous we we ſhould be all united in the general religion of Jeſus Chriſt, and ſtudying to make friends, and unite the hearts of thoſe who had been divided by names and parties. and thus, if at firſt he did not prevail over mens prejudices, yet he failed not to gain their hearts; and ſo, by degrees, made way for his ſeaſonable diſcourſes. and O what holy charms and pious arts had he to catch mens ſouls, and to make them purſue their own happineſs? a charity which he thought far ſuperior to any that could be done for the body, (though he was eminent in that kind alſo), and of which he would ſpeak with the greateſt concern and emotion of ſpirit. how many arts had he to better them, and make them good and happy? his love made him always as intent upon this, as the love of money will make the covetous

man bend all his thoughts and deſigns to add to his treaſure. how would he take advantage from every thing, to make all things work together for their good? he ſeemed to be the viſible ſpring that put all good deſigns in motion for bettering the ſtate of our church. he was the genius that put life and ſpirit into the ſerious ſtudies and pious endeavours of thoſe he converſed with. how careful was he to propagate every where right apprehenſions of religion? and what a viſible influence had he among us in this matter? what wiſe methods had he to make his friends ſenſible of their infirmities and failings, by ſpeaking to them of his own? and to ſtir them up to zeal and diligence in piety and good works, and to the uſe of the moſt effectual means for purifying their ſouls, by telling them inſtances of the piety and life of others of his acquaintance? he was careful even to make his ordinary converſation uſeful for this end, both in giving the example of an unaffected modeſty and meekneſs, and dropping in always ſomething that might

make them more in love with religion and goodneſs. the effects of his love and care of mens ſouls extended even to thoſe who knew him not; and he obliged always his friends and acquaintances, as there was occaſion, to employ the intereſt of their friendſhip and familiarity with others, in perſuading them to piety and a good life; and alluring them to the reading of good books, and ſuch other means, as might ſerve both to enlighten and purify them. and when he heard of the good fruits of ſuch deſigns, how much would he be cheered with it? his love and veneration for good men was ſingular and extraordinary; nothing he more delighted in than their pious converſation: and he could ſo well repreſent their piety and good life to others, as to make them enamoured with it too.

His love and charity were eminent alſo in the bounty of his alms, and the relief of the outward neceſſities of others. the firſt money he gained being at the univerſity, he was careful to lay by a portion of it for the poor, before he

made any uſe of it for himſelf; devoting, as it were, the firſt fruits unto God. and this courſe he obſerved throughout the reſt of his life, laying aſide always a portion of his income for the relief of the neceſſitous. this has been the practice of many charitable perſons, as the beſt method to ſecure a ſtock for their charity; to make them give it with a liberal and willing mind; and to ſeek out fit objects for it. were this practice more frequently obſerved, it would undoubtedly make Chriſtians more bountiful, and their charity and alms more profitable to themſelves and others. and a tenth thus chearfully beſtowed, accompanied with the other exerciſes of a pious life, would undoubtedly bring in its hundred-fold of bleſſings in this world, and in the world to come life everlaſting. and, as he was careful thus to provide for charity and alms; ſo alſo to diſpoſe of it aright. he 'did 'not his alms to be ſeen of men;' many were revived by his bounty, who knew nothing of it. he choſe out ſome fit perſons, both in the city and the country,

who were acquainted with the neceſſities and ſtraits of poor, modeſt, honeſt houſe-keepers, to whom he frequently gave money to relieve their wants. and theſe were ſometimes honeſt perſons of different perſuaſions, who were relieved in their ſtraits they knew not by whom. a noble example of Chriſtian charity! bleſſed be God there are yet ſome ſparks of it in the world. God grant ſuch pious examples may encourage and ſtir up more to a Chriſtian imitation of them. nor was his charity ſo exemplary only in the liberal diſpenſing of portions of his yearly incomes, but alſo in ſuch a prudent diſpoſition of what the wiſdom of Providence, and his pious father's care had provided for him in his laſt will and teſtament, as might moſt tend to the publick good and advantage; as will in due time appear.

But, among the other expreſſions of his love, his friendſhip ſure deſerves a grateful remembrance. friendſhip, the flower of ſociety, the eaſe of our griefs, the heightener and refiner of our joys, our guide and counſellor, and the life

of angels! many have made fine pictures of it; but the want of true friendſhip has been generally the obſervation and complaint of all men. but O! how eminent an example was he of ſincere and hearty friendſhip? this was the darling of his ſoul, and the delight of his ſpirit. he did not act it to ſerve little deſigns, and private intereſts; but he was full of cordial love and affection, even like the love of Jonathan. how freely would he open his heart, and unboſom his thoughts, and give faithful counſel to his friend! how dear were his intereſts to him, and how wiſely would he manage them! if there was any worldly thing that was apt to create grief and trouble to him, it was the diſaſters or bad ſucceſs that befel them: and their happy events would ſo refreſh and cheer his ſpirits, that, as has been taken notice of, it had even influence on his ſickly body, and would give it ſome greater meaſure of health. how readily would he forego his own intereſts to oblige his friend, and deny himſelf, as is well known to ſome, even in thoſe de-

ſigns and inclinations for which uſually we have a great concern when we are once engaged in them? ſo far was he from deſiring to ingroſs the love and kindneſs of his friends, that he made it his great buſineſs and delight to propagate true friendſhip, and make them friends to one another. and in this he ſtudied to render it the moſt uſeful thing in the world, and to make it ſerve the great ends of piety and religion. thoſe in whom he obſerved the ſpirit of true piety and goodneſs, or any appearance and likelihood of the one's having influence on, and bettering the other's life and practice, he endeavoured to bring them into acquaintance and familiarity; to endear them to each other, and to make their friendſhip uſeful for promoting true piety and goodneſs, both in themſelves and others. and this perhaps is the moſt effectual means for recovering ſomething of the ancient Chriſtian ſpirit in the world. many methods have been ſet on foot, under pretence of effectuating this deſign. in the Greek and Roman churches, men have formed new

ſocieties, inſtituted new orders, engaged them to peculiar vows, and given them particular religions, as they call them, ſubordinate to the general religion of Jeſus Chriſt. and among thoſe whom the groſs corruptions and tyranny of the Roman church, both in faith and worſhip, have thruſt from their communion, many have groundleſly ſeparated from one another, and formed diſtinct ſects and parties. but how little either of theſe have contributed to the promoting of true piety and goodneſs, experience may make the world ſenſible. the deſigns of the former have ended in raiſing the ſplendor and revenues each of their peculiar order, in magnifying its rules in oppoſition to others, in obſerving their particular inſtitutions, which become matter of mere formality and cuſtom; "having a ſhew of humi-"lity and will-worſhip, but do not tend "to the purifying of the conſcience:" and the reſt of the people are apt to think they have not ſuch obligations to piety and a good life, as if the care of that were only incumbent on thoſe who

had peculiarly aſſumed to themſelves the title of Religious. and the zeal and endeavours of the latter are uſually ſpent in keeping up the reputation of their ſect and party, in thoſe things eſpecially wherein they differ from others; and this ordinarily makes the ſtudies and deſigns on all ſides to run into this channel. but perhaps, if, inſtead of ſuch groundleſs diviſions and ſchiſms, and peculiar inſtitutions and vows, undertaken upon pretence of bettering the ſtate of religion, more care were had to entertain and propagate an holy and ſincere friendſhip, we might ſee more bleſſed fruits of it; whilſt, by the friendly communications of the ſerious, their ſentiments about religion would be mutually cleared, their minds united, and they inſtructed in the beſt means of purifying their hearts, inflamed with one another's zeal, and ſtirred up to ſpread the ſame temper among others, as far as their influences could reach. ſuch an holy combination (not to obſerve the vows of any particular order, or to divide from the reſt of the world,

but) to follow Jesus; to live according to his holy religion, and to persuade others who profess it to a sincere conformity thereunto; O how desirable were it! it was thus, methinks, that the Son of God did at first spread his religion in the world; it was thus that the zeal and piety of his first followers did continue it; and it is thus that we must expect to see the life and spirit of it to breathe once again amongst us.

And now I need not speak much of the purity and cleanness of his heart, and his great unconcernedness for this present world, it having been the general observation of all that knew him. he looked indeed always as a stranger and pilgrim in it; and was dead to it in heart and spirit long before his body had taken leave of it. good God! what a deep sense had he of the meanness and vanity of this world's hurry and designs, which he used to say looked to him like the projects and scuffle of children and fools? in his very youth his heart was clear of any inclination to it; and he would even then say to his in-

timates, that, abſtracting from the will of God, mere curioſity would make him long for another world, it being a tedious thing to ſee ſtill the ſame dull play acted over again here. what little regard had he to the getting or keeping of what the world calls wealth and riches? never was he ſeen to have any project that tended that way. he could ſcarce expend any thoughts about his yearly incomes, but remitted ſtill the care of that to others, without calling them to an account. how excellently had he learned his maſter's leſſon, 'to take no thought 'what he ſhould eat, what he ſhould 'drink, or wherewithal he ſhould be 'clothed!' never any thing he was more unconcerned in than this. whatever was ſet before him for the ſuſtentation of his body, he did eat of it, asking no queſtions for appetite's ſake. his thoughts and his ſpirit were never taken up with thoſe actions of the animal life, even when he was about them; and, while he ſupported nature, he ſcarce ſuffered his taſte to have any complacency in them. he thought ſtrange to ſee thoſe who pre-

tended to a Chriſtian temperance, exerciſe ſuch voluptuous pleaſure in their meats, making them the ſubject of their table-talk, and, as if they owned their bellies for their gods, profeſſing they loved ſuch and ſuch diſhes with all their ſouls. alas! that the weakneſs and infirmity of human nature, by which we are levelled with the beaſts, ſhould become the matter of our vanity and voluptuouſneſs, inſtead of that humble and abaſing ſenſe we ought to have of ourſelves.

The innocence and purity of his life was obſervable from his very childhood. he was never tinctured with the leaſt appearances of thoſe impurities which are the reproach of the Chriſtian world. how great an example was he of Chriſtian continence and celibacy to all that knew him? his very air and converſation ſhewed how much he was mortified to the world in this reſpect. he had no ſmall abhorrence of all diſcourſes and actions that ſavoured any thing of impurity; and could not endure the obſcene

wit of thoſe who were apt to wreſt the talk of mens ordinary diſcourſe that way.

As the pleaſures and pomp of the world could never bewitch, ſo the hardſhips and troubles of it did never oppreſs and overcome his ſpirit; but, in all conditions, his mind ſeemed always equal, and conſtant to itſelf. when he lived in the country, the hardſhips and inconveniencies he then endured, were the common talk of all that knew him: his coarſe fare, and hard lodging, and unwonted ſolitude, the extreme coldneſs of the ſeaſon, and the comfortleſs ſhelters he had againſt it, did excite the compaſſion of others, but never leſſened the quiet and contentedneſs of his ſpirit; and he ſuffered them with as much patience, as if he had been bred up from his infancy in the Turkiſh gallies. any traverſes that befel him in the circumſtances of his life and deſigns, did never becloud the natural ſerenity and chearfulneſs of his mind: and he uſed to ſay in relation to ſuch diſcontents, that as he bleſſed God he was not naturally melancholy, ſo he thought an acquired

melancholy was ſcandalous in a clergyman.

And O what a profound humility of ſoul did ſhine forth in his life and actions! the admiration of the perfections of the Almighty, in the contemplation of which he was often taken up, had ſunk him into truly mean thoughts of himſelf. all who had occaſion to converſe with him, were ſenſible of the lowlineſs of his mind; and yet he ſcarce ever obſerved thoſe little officious ceremonies or compliments, which we muſt oftimes make uſe of to cover or counteract the pride of our ſpirits, or which it prompts us to traffick with, to purchaſe the regard and eſteem of others. he diſdained not to converſe with the meaneſt, and looked upon every man as his fellow and companion. and the exemplary regard he had to young children, was equally the expreſſion of his humility and his love. how ready was he on all occaſions to converſe with them, taking a ſingular delight in their harmleſs innocence, and uſually, after the example of the great maſter of love,

affectionately embracing and bleſſing them? and ſuch was the pious meekneſs of his ſoul towards others, that if at any time his natural temper raiſed any little commotion in his ſpirit, (which was ſcarce ever taken notice of after his entering into the holy function), yet he quickly appeaſed it, and never ſuffered the ſun to go down upon his wrath. he was never ſeen to boaſt of any of his performances, nor yet to uſe the finer and more ſubtile fetch of vain-glory, in an elaborate undervaluing of them, that others might commend them. but the expreſſions of his mean thoughts of himſelf were always ſo natural, and ſo full of ſimplicity, that one might eaſily obſerve them to ariſe from the bottom of his ſoul; and all his actions and his converſation made appear the truth and ſincerity of them. though his piety and innocence were eminent in the eyes of all that knew him, yet he had no ſmall ſenſe of his own unworthineſs, when he ſet himſelf in the *light of God's countenance*, beheld his purity, and thought on his infinite goodneſs and mercy to him in

Jeſus Chriſt, (about which his thoughts were frequently taken up). O how deeply was he humbled under the ſenſe of his ſinfulneſs and ingratitude, and the little returns he had made to ſuch undeſerved goodneſs! when we are in a total darkneſs, we cannot diſcern one thing from another; and an ordinary light will diſcover to us the groſſer lineaments and more remarkable differences of things: but ſome beams darted in from the ſun will ſhew us much impurity and foulneſs, where we thought all to have been pure and clean. and O with what ſeriouſneſs and ſimplicity did this enlightened ſoul expreſs the ſenſe he had of the ſinfulneſs of his nature, and the worthleſsneſs of his perſon! almoſt the very laſt words he ſpoke were to this purpoſe, uttered with an extraordinary devotion of ſpirit. after having witneſſed his reſignation to the will of God, and his humble hopes in his mercy and goodneſs: But, ſays he, when you have the charity to remember me in your prayers, do not think me a better man than I am; but look upon me as indeed

I am, a moſt miſerable ſinner. a moſt miſerable ſinner! 'O if the righteous 'ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the un-'godly and the wicked appear!'

But I forbear to mention any farther the graces and virtues which ſhined forth in the life and ſpirit of our friend. the experience which many of you have had of them in his converſation, will furniſh you with a better ſenſe of them than all I can ſay. as to the particular inſtances I have given, there are more than one or two here preſent who can bear witneſs to the truth of them. and I hope there are none here will think me guilty of ſo much impudence, as to utter falſhoods of him in a place where he was ſo well known, and where there are ſo many ſo well acquainted with moſt of the important and private paſſages of his life. no. I know you are ſenſible how far ſhort all I have ſaid comes of his true worth. he had need be endued with the ſame ſpirit, that would ſpeak aright of him; and true goodneſs cannot be expreſſed, but felt.

Give me leave only to join in with

your meditations, and to think with you on the leſſons we may learn from the preſent diſpenſation, according to our different relations and circumſtances.

And now, good people, let us conſider his example, and our early loſs of him. O that we would once learn to be wiſe, and to live like Chriſtians! you are all ſenſible what an eminent example he hath given us: and, alas! what hinders that we ſhould not be followers of him, even as he alſo was of Chriſt! how may we ſee in him all our little pretences and prejudices againſt piety and goodneſs daſhed and confounded? where is the man that will ſay, he taſtes as much ſolid pleaſure in his jollity and cups, that his luſts and vices create in him as great a ſerenity of mind, afford him as much comfort, diſpoſe him to as much patience and contentedneſs in any condition, as were always ſeen to be the reward and bleſſing of the innocence and goodneſs of his life? when did ever ſuch an univerſal eſteem and love wait upon a bad man to his grave, as we ſee hath accompanied the piety and virtue

of one who was ambitious of nothing leſs than the glory of men ; while yet all mouths are opened in his praiſe, every man ſpeaks good of him, and perſons of all ſects and perſuaſions amongſt us lament his loſs, and bedew his hearſe with tears ? O how peaceful and reſigned do we ſee the death of the righteous ! and how unlike muſt ours be to it, if we will not live their life ! what an uniformity is there in the virtue and innocence of that life that ſprings from true goodneſs, and the love of God ? and O how void muſt we be of it, how palpable our hypocriſy, if our actions contradict one the other ; if we bleſs God, and yet curſe and do evil to our neighbour ; if we confeſs and beg pardon for our ſins, and yet breathe and meditate revenge againſt others, and if we have not a reſpect to all his commandments ! if we muſt needs look upon the ſaints and holy men of God in old time, as if they had been creatures of another nature, and conſider their example as diſproportioned to our condition ; yet here we have ſeen one con-

verſing amongſt us like to ourſelves, ſubject to the ſame paſſions, temptations, and infirmities, and yet conquering all theſe *through Chriſt that ſtrengthened him*. and why ſhould we turn off all ſerious thoughts to old age, as if we were then only fit for God, when we were fit for nothing elſe! may not the piety and innocence of his youth, ſhame us into a better mind, and more Chriſtian lives! 'for honourable age is not that 'which ſtandeth in length of time, nor 'that is meaſured by number of years. 'but wiſdom is the gray hair unto men, 'and an unſpotted life is old age. thus 'the righteous that is dead, ſhall con-'demn the ungodly which are living; 'and youth that is ſoon perfected, the 'many years and old age of the un-'righteous.'

And O what ſhall we ſay of that Divine providence, which hath taken this light from among us! the ways of the Lord are wonderful, and his judgments are a great deep. one who was ſo great an example of piety, an ornament to his country and the church, is quickly

removed from us in his youth: and many who are the reproach of religion, the scandal of the world, and the shame of human nature, are left to old age; whether to fill up the measure of their sins, or to lead them to repentance, God knows. he whom God had blessed with so much light to instruct us, and virtue and zeal to direct us; who was so helpful to enlighten us by his sermons and discourses, and to edify us by his example, is suddenly snatched away from us. O that we may 'hear the rod, and 'him who hath appointed it!' when we make no use of God's talents, (such are the instructions, and counsel, and example of good men), he takes them from us. alas! what an ill account can we render of this? could we almost imagine sermons more serious, affectionate, and heavenly; and yet wherein have we been prevailed with to better our lives, to forego one vice we were otherways inclined to, or to do that good we were averse to? all the use we make of his example is, to seem to approve and commend it; but wherein

do we imitate it? do we think that other helps would do better, that other means and circumstances would have more influence on our lives? alas! my brethren, they that 'will not hear Moses 'and the prophets, neither will they be 'persuaded though one should rise from 'the dead.' but we are usually most sensible of the worth of worldly blessings, and most thankful for them, when God takes them from us. and O that our appetite may be thus at least quickened for spiritual blessings! O that our present loss may have this influence upon us, that we may be truly sensible of God's goodness in bestowing this blessing so long upon us, that we may adore his providence in depriving us of it, and that the impressions he hath left on our minds of his life and spirit, and the seed of the gospel he hath sown in our hearts, may by God's grace yet bring forth fruit in us. finally, my brethren, 'whatsoever 'things are true, whatsoever things are 'honest, whatsoever things are just, &c. 'those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in

'him, do; and the God of peace ſhall be 'with you.'

And you, my friends, who were his more peculiar care, his children, of whom he travailed in birth till Chriſt ſhould be formed in you, whom he was ſo ſolicitous to have fitted for the ſervice of Jeſus, and the care of ſouls; alas! who can blame your tears, or with-hold your grief? 'My father, my father, 'the chariot of Iſrael, and the horſemen 'thereof.' it is not poſſible for me to expreſs the bleſſing you had in him: I know your own hearts are ſenſible of it beyond all I can ſay. O what an uſeful guide and director was he! how dear were you unto him! how unaffectedly humble and ingenuous in his converſation! how wiſe and pious were his inſtructions and advices! how much were his thoughts taken up about you, making them all ſerve for his great deſign of fitting you for the holy function! and how great and unſpeakable is your loſs! O let us adore, and ſubmit to the Divine providence. ſearch and try your hearts, and conſider your ways, and

reckon what fruit you have brought forth worthy of such a blessing; and whether you have not deserved the removal of that light, while you have been so little careful to be enlightened by his instructions, or warmed by his piety and zeal. God withdraws from us such useful blessings, to stir us up to shake off our sloth, and to a more ardent care and endeavour for the enlightening of our minds, and the purifying of our hearts, for which his life and spirit would have been so useful to us. if you would let the world see what esteem you had for him, if you would not be guilty of the abuse and misimprovement of one of the greatest blessings you ever had, remember his instructions, follow his advices, and study to be what of all the world he was most desirous you should be; make it appear that his labour is not in vain. 'you have known his 'doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, 'long-suffering, charity, and patience.' you may remember how he behaved himself among you; what, and how he instructed you. you know how desirous

he was, both to have you good men, and well fitted for the holy miniſtry. conſider how, above all things, he directed you to the purifying of your hearts, and the exerciſes of true repentance. think what gravity he required in your behaviour, what modeſty and humility in your words and converſation, anſwerable to your deſigning ſuch an employment; what abſtraction from unſuitable buſineſs or company. call to mind the care he had of directing your ſtudies aright; how he diverted you from ſuch learning as was not apt to give you a ſenſe of piety and religion; took you off from an itching curioſity about queſtions and ſtrifes of words, which miniſter to vanity and contention; perſuaded you to cleanneſs of heart, truly pious deſigns, and frequent devotion, as the beſt diſpoſitions and helps for knowledge; and directed you to ſuch books and ſtudies as might ſerve to give you a right and deep ſenſe of Chriſtianity, and of the importance and duties of the holy function. remember how much he bewailed the unſeemly

haſte, and unfit methods and arts which ſome uſed, to thruſt themſelves into the holy miniſtry; and admired the different conduct of the holy men in old times; who ſenſible of its great weight, and apprehenſive of their own inſufficiency, were almoſt always forced to it by the people, and the governors of the church. conſider, I beſeech you, of what importance he thought it both for your own ſouls, and thoſe which might be your charge, that you ſhould uſe all prudent means ſincerely to examine yourſelves beforehand, of your fitneſs both in heart and ſpirit for that employment, and the purity of your intentions, deſigning truly the ſervice of Jeſus Chriſt, and the good of mens ſouls, and not the ſordid ends of vanity, worldly-mindedneſs, or ambition. and O that theſe things may ſink into your hearts! and that you may continue in the things you have learned of him, and have been aſſured of, knowing of whom you have learned them!

And you whom providence hath intruſted with the care and education of the *youth*, pardon me alſo to call to

mind the example of our dear friend, while he made one of your ſociety. you know you have the charge of the hopes of the next generation; and that the welfare both of the church and ſtate, and their own good and happineſs, doth very much depend upon the right forming of their minds and tempers in their younger years; and that, as the making this your great deſign in that employment, doth moſt tend to promote it, ſo you can never more ſerve your own intereſts in it. all callings have their ſeveral temptations; and diviſions, or ſloth, or intereſt, or ignorance, may be the bane of this. the ill management of it has a more univerſally bad influence on the world, than that of moſt other employments, as the happy fruits of the faithful diſcharge of it doth as far tranſcend many others. we are all made for eternity; and we cannot go about any thing aright, if our eye be not fixed upon its end, and if all ſubordinate ends have not a reſpect to the great end of our being. the holy calling has this for its immediate end and deſign; and, next to

it, yours has the neareſt relation to it. we are ſet apart to declare the light which Jeſus Chriſt has revealed from heaven, by which 'he brought life and 'immortality to light through the goſ-'pel;' and you, to clear up the remains of the light of nature that is within us; and he that dwells in light inacceſſible, is the fountain and author of both. we ought to be careful, that men be not miſled by falſe lights, nor miſtake darkneſs for light, and to perſuade them to live by the light of Jeſus Chriſt: and you are to beware, that we do not take the prejudices of childhood, cuſtom, and education, our own or other mens fooliſh fancies, for clear notions and lights of our underſtanding. as the bad uſe of our reaſon, and the confuſion of the light of nature, has made men pervert or disbelieve the light of Jeſus Chriſt; ſo the ſincere and right uſe of it doth ſtrangely diſpoſe us to receive that light, to admire and love it, and to lead our lives accordingly. true philoſophy leads us to acknowledge and adore the author of our being; to admire his

infinite perfections, from the vaſtneſs, order, and uſefulneſs of his works; to be ſenſible of his abſolute diſpoſal of all things, and our entire dependence upon him for life, thought, and motion. it ſhews us the ſpiritual nature of our immortal ſouls, and the meanneſs and vanity of ſenſual pleaſures. it diſcovers to us the ſhortneſs of our reaſon, and the little ground we have for vanity, either for our knowledge, who know ſo few and ſo little of his works, or for what we are or can do, who owe all to him, and bear ſo mean a proportion to the univerſe of bodies and ſpirits. it lets us ſee, that our only happineſs were to have our wills united to his; and ſhews us, that we ſhould love him above all, and have an univerſal love for all men; and that all our felicity conſiſts in ſtudying thus heartily the common good of the world. it gives occaſion to make us ſenſible of the ſtrange corruption of our hearts, and how far we are from being what we ſhould be, and how unable we are to give ourſelves thoſe diſpoſitions of love, and fear, and reverence, that we owe our Ma-

ker. and thus it leads us to the Redeemer of mankind, and makes appear how much need we have of his grace and truth. I doubt not but these, and such like considerations, do engage you to make this your great view and design, to dispose the youth, both by your instructions and example, to a right sense of religion, and suitable apprehensions of the Maker of the world, and the Redeemer of mankind; without which view philosophy is altogether vain and impertinent. and you yourselves know how exemplary your friend was in making it useful for this end. his pious and Christian Ethicks, his peaceable and devout life, his private instruction and training up of the youth, in order to this design, will be lasting remembrances of it to many ages.

And now, my brethren, what shall we say, or whither shall we turn our thoughts! alas! our loss is great and unspeakable. how much do we stand in need of such lights and examples! alas! how weighty is our employment! what prudence and piety does it call for!

how dangerous is the neglect, or ill management of it! what need have we of ſuch a monitor to ſhake off our ſloth, and awe, and inſtruct us by his example! 'Pariſhes are holy ſhips,' as one ſays *, 'whoſe Curates are the pi-
'lots, and eternity the port they muſt
'guide them to. if it need ſo much art
'and ſo long experience to ſail upon
'the ſeas, what knowledge and pru-
'dence does it call for, to paſs over
'happily the ſea of this world, where
'tempeſts never ceaſe? alas! who can
'think, without ſenſible grief and bitter
'tears, that the helm of theſe veſſels,
'which contain ſuch precious wares, as
'coſt no leſs than the blood of God,
'ſhould be committed ordinarily to men
'of ſo little experience; that they are
'not only ignorant of the tempeſts,
'ſhelves, and banks of this terrible ſea,
'but even have not the ſtrength and in-
'duſtry to guide their own little veſſel
'back to the road? and thoſe ineſti-
'mable riches are frequently intruſted
'to thoſe whom they will not truſt with
'a purſe of fifteen or twenty pieces.

* *Entretiens de l'Abbe Jean*, &c. p. 370.

'but, even when the pilots are able,
'who would not at laſt loſe their cou-
'rage to ſee themſelves ſailing amidſt
'ſo many hazards, and with ſo little
'ſucceſs? how many ſtupid ones fall
'out of the veſſel? how many impru-
'dent ones get out to ſail apart in ſhal-
'lops? how many deſperate ones throw
'themſelves over, and abandon them-
'ſelves to the fury of the waves? what
'diſquiets, what griefs, and what trou-
'ble for the poor pilot? he muſt run
'on all ſides to reach out his hand to
'thoſe that fall. he muſt exhauſt his
'lungs, in trying to call thoſe that flee
'away. he muſt even frequently throw
'himſelf into the ſea, to recover thoſe
'whom the waves ſwallow up. if he
'watch not, the fall of the firſt will be
'imputed to him. if he be ſilent, he will
'anſwer for the flight of the ſecond.
'if he fear labour and travail, he will
'be accuſed of the other's deſpair. if,
'in a word, he want vigilance, ſtrength,
'and courage, he will be guilty of as
'many bloodſheds as he lets ſouls pe-
'riſh.' this is a faint image of our con-

dition. how may theſe thoughts fill us with aſtoniſhment and fear? what a risk do we run while we are engaged in ſuch a dangerous employment? what piety, and prudence, and vigilance, and courage, does it call for? how ſtrangely does our ſloth and negligence infect one another, and lull us into careleſſneſs, till the waves ſwallow us up? what need have we of ſome to call upon us, to mind us of our danger, to make us aſhamed of our ſloth, and to ſtir us up by their example? and what a bleſſing was our friend to us in this reſpect? how did he inſpire life and ſpirit in all good deſigns amongſt us, and ſtir us up to our duty by his publick and private care, as far as his influences could reach, and by his example? how well did he anſwer the character of a good man, and a good clergyman? his innocency was eminent and obſervable from his childhood; ſo that he had a good report from them that were without. he had been trained up from a child in the holy ſcriptures; and ſuch inſtructions as might inſpire him with the right know-

ledge of them, and a deep ſenſe of religion; and which might make him wiſe unto ſalvation. as he had been devoted for the holy calling from his infancy, ſo he was called to it by the authority and hearty approbation of thoſe who are impowered by God, having the inward teſtimony of a good conſcience, and of the purity of his intentions; far from any deſign of vain glory or intereſt. his mind was ſtored with all ſort of knowledge without vanity or contention. his piety was eminent and ſingular, always accompanied with an unaffected humility. his ſpirit and diſpoſition was ever peaceable. his love to God, and mens ſouls, made him ſtudy the divine art of becoming all things to all men that he might ſave ſome. none was ever more mortified to covetouſneſs or filthy lucre. his charity and almſgivings were exemplary, in all things ſhewing himſelf a pattern of good works. in his doctrine he ſhewed uncorruptedneſs, gravity, and ſincerity, ſound words that could not be condemned. his diſcourſe was always modeſt, and his con-

verſation uſeful. he watched all occaſions of doing good to mens ſouls, and would not let them ſlip. never man was more apt to teach, being gentle to all men. thoſe that oppoſed themſelves to the truth, or were overtaken in a fault, he endeavoured to inſtruct, and reſtore in the ſpirit of meekneſs, avoiding fooliſh queſtions, and ſtrifes of words. and, by walking in all good conſcience before God and man, he hath, among other things, given a ſingular inſtance of gaining the love and eſteem of all, and of preſerving his perſon and his office from that contempt which they ſay is ſo generally thrown upon our order. ſo that even ſcarce any man deſpiſed his youth. how may we behold in his life, as in a glaſs, the virtues and qualities of a true Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt? what a living inſtruction was it to us, whereby we might obſerve our own defects, and be ſtirred up to our duty? who can fathom the myſteries of Providence, or tell what judgments may threaten the church by the removal of ſuch a burning and ſhining light? 'the righteous

'man perisheth, and no man layeth it to 'heart; merciful men are taken away, 'none considering that it is from the 'evil to come.' O that his life and example may be yet active among us; that we may be acted by the same spirit, not to mind our own things, but the things of Jesus Christ; that we may have pity on ourselves and this miserable church; that the sense of our lamentable distractions, and the universal corruption of mens lives, may sink deep into our hearts! O that the love of Jesus, and the care of souls, may inspire our hearts, and direct our studies, and enliven our sermons, and increase our vigilance, and guide our lives! 'Save 'us, Lord, or else we perish.'

And now, my friends, what words or grief can express our loss? you whom nature or choice had more peculiarly endeared to him; you who were honoured with his friendship, and blessed with his conversation; who were guided by his counsel, and comforted by his presence; who was the relish of your joys, and the ease of your griefs: 'I am

'diſtreſſed for thee, my brother; very 'pleaſant haſt thou been unto me. thy 'love unto me was wonderful, paſſing 'the love of women.' but, alas! what do we mourn our private loſſes, when the loſs is ſo publick and univerſal, and every man concerned in it; while it is not the removal of our candle only, but of a light of the world, and a publick good? every man who knew him, or heard of him, claims a ſhare in our grief, and bewail their particular loſs in him. the affectionate father remembers a moſt dutiful and comfortable ſon; relations cry out of the loſs of their deareſt and moſt uſeful kinſman; friends bewail their being torn from a friend indeed; the learned bemoan the want of a great owner and promoter of true knowledge; the youth lament their being deprived of a moſt pious, wiſe, affectionate and uſeful guide; the poor groan for the loſs of their father; the devout find the want of a pious director and pattern; the church feels herſelf deprived of one of her pureſt lights; the clergy are ſenſible he was to them an enſample

and an honour; the people acknowledge they had a bleſſing of him in his life and doctrine; the whole nation may feel the want of a great promoter of true loyalty, and all Chriſtian virtues and graces, by his example and inſtructions, and are ſenſible what an honour he was to them: yea, the ſeveral ſects among us lament his loſs, and ſeem to confeſs, that a few like him would ſoon heal our ſchiſms; and that his pious life, and meek inſtructions, if any thing, would ſoon have recovered them from their errors. O how is our loſs ſwallowed up in the publick! 'my father, my 'father, the chariots of Iſrael, and the 'horſemen thereof!'

But whither would our paſſions drive us? ſhall we forget the governor of the world, and who is 'the Lord of life and 'death?' we muſt not look on his removal from us as a fatal neceſſity, or a blind ſtroke of chance and fortune; as the ſport of the humours and parts that compoſed his body. no, no. the author of the univerſe employs ſtill that ſame power, and wiſdom, and goodneſs, in

ruling the world, that he did in making it. 'in him we live, and move, and have 'our being.' his hand is in every thing that befals us; all that ſtrikes our ſenſes, which we ſee, or hear, or know, or feel within ourſelves, and impute to other inſtruments, are really the effects of his power, and are ordered by him for great and wiſe ends. 'a hair of our head does 'not fall to the ground without his 'leave.' this that has now befallen us, is an holy indiſpenſable effect of a decree of the providence of God, to be executed in its due time. he had not ſent him into this world for a laſting temporal comfort unto us, but for the great and wiſe ends of his own glory, and of the world that is to come. let us not look upon this accident in itſelf, but in God, and in his will. let us, in humble ſilence, adore the unſearchable depth of his ſecrets; acknowledge the holineſs of his decrees; bleſs the conduct of his providence; and, (according to that ſingular example which we have ſeen on this occaſion, in one of the greateſt fatherly affections, heightened by all kinds of

pious endearments), uniting our wills to the will of God, and ſacrificing our natural paſſions unto it, let us walk with him, in him, and for him, and what he hath willed in us, and for us, to all eternity.

And, truly, if we look upon our dear friend, and conſider what he hath been, and what he now is, and ſhall be to all eternity, it will make us yet the more ſenſible how much we ought to reſign ourſelves to, and glorify the will of our heavenly Father in his wiſe diſpoſal of him. the life of a Chriſtian is a continual ſacrifice to God; crucifying our earthly affections, mortifying our ſinful paſſions, and ſubduing our wills to his; and this ſacrifice is finiſhed and perfected by death: and the lives of men, and the accidents that befal them, ought to affect our ſpirits, according as they break off or advance in ſacrificing their hearts and lives to God. how comfortable has his life been to us and to all good men in this reſpect? from the time he was devoted and given unto Jeſus Chriſt in his baptiſm, how has he

been fitted by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to offer up his life a continual ſacrifice to God; reſtraining conſtantly the corruption of his nature from breaking out into any great impurity or crime, ſubduing every day his paſſions, purifying his affections, ſtudying to do every thing in and for God, and endeavouring a continual reſignation of his will to him? and in this we muſt not regret his few years, and the ſhortneſs of his days; for with God 'one day is as a 'thouſand years, and a thouſand years 'as one day.' length of life is not to be meaſured by many revolutions of the heavens, but by the progreſs we have made in the great deſign for which we are ſent into the world: and in this reſpect 'he, being ſanctified in a little 'time, hath fulfilled a long time;' ſo that he hath truly lived much in a few years, and died an old man in eight and twenty. he hath now finiſhed the work that God had given him to do: he hath accompliſhed the thing for which he was ſent into the world: by death he hath now perfected the ſacrifice of

himſelf, and the will of God is fulfilled in him. whatever horror there may be in death to the natural man, however terrible it is to the wicked and impenitent; yet to the godly, to all that conſider it in Jeſus Chriſt, it is full of joy and comfort. 'O death, where is thy 'ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? 'the ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength 'of ſin is the law. but thanks be to 'God, who hath given us the victory 'through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.' he hath made the king of terrors to become the object of the moſt ardent deſires and wiſhes of his own; for, if to us *to live be Chriſt*, ſure

To die is gain. I will not now launch out into this boundleſs ocean, to ſpeak of the unſpeakable happineſs of the other world, and of the great advantages of the death of thoſe whoſe life is Chriſt's. but O how may this, after the example of the ancient chriſtians, fill us with joy and comfort, in the pious and well-grounded hopes of the happineſs of our dear friend! well may we think we hear him ſay, Why do you mourn for me?

weep not for me, but weep for your-ſelves; for *to me to die is gain.* we live ſtill in a world of ſin and miſery, of dark-neſs and folly: we ſee nothing here but matter of tears and grief; we are among a crowd of people who are marching on to eternal miſery, who know not but the next ſtep may bring them to their journey's end; and yet never think of any thing, but filling their bellies, ſatis-fying their luſts, or worrying one ano-ther by the way. we have great difficulty to find the ſtrait path to eternal life; and, when we know it, and are entered into it, the ſeeming pleaſure of the by-paths, the temptations and example of the throng about us, a rooted corruption within us, and a ſubtle enemy that watch-es us, are ready at every ſtep to betray us, and to turn us aſide into the paths that lead to deſtruction: and what a bleſſing is it to be freed of all theſe?

How happy is our friend, who enjoys now an abſolute freedom from all the pains, and griefs, and troubles of this miſerable world; who is out of the reach of all thoſe temptations and ſnares;

whoſe ſoul is unclogged from an earthly body, freed from its guilt, and cleanſed from its corruptions by the blood of Jeſus, and put beyond the poſſibility of ever ſinning or offending againſt its Maker, which now only begins to live, (the being born into this world being rather a death, and dying the beginning to live for ever); being now all light, and life, and love, and motion, ſeeing and enjoying God; having its will wholly ſwallowed up in his, being as it were loſt in him, and in the rapturous bleſs of his love; joining in pure and holy friendſhip with angels and archangels, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, in adoring and admiring our Maker and Redeemer, being enlarged in holy charity and ardent prayers for us poor mortals here below, and rejoicing over one ſinner that repenteth; waiting for the redemption of the body, when this mortal ſhall put on immortality, and what is here ſown in corruption and a natural body, ſhall be raiſed in incorruption and ſpiritual; and death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory.

when they ſhall happily be reunited, and live in joy and bliſs to all eternity? 'bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord; 'they reſt from their labours, and their 'works do follow them. they that be 'wiſe, ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of 'the firmament: and they that turn 'many to righteouſneſs, as the ſtars for 'ever and ever.' who can ſpeak aright of that happineſs which eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived? O let us not bewail the abſence of our friend with fruitleſs ſighs and tears; nor *ſorrow as they that have no hope:* but let us always endeavour, after his example, ſo to live to Chriſt in this world, that our death may be the ſame gain and advantage to us; that with him, and all the bleſſed ſpirits, we may live in eternal friendſhip and love with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, God over all bleſſed for evermore. Amen.

FINIS.